Oxfordshire Guardian

Bicester, Banbury and Kidlington

Thursday, November 30 - Wednesday, December 6, 2017 oxfordshireguardian.co.uk Free

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Hero taxi driver saved girl falling victim to abduction

By Samantha McGregor

A BICESTER taxi driver has been hailed a hero by police and a council after his quick-thinking stopped a 13-year-old girl being abducted and put through an "unthinkable ordeal".

In February, cabbie Satbir Arora, 39, had been booked to drive the teenager to Gloucester train station and was told the fare would be paid at the other end.

The girl, who was still wearing her school uniform, had arranged to meet Sam Hewings at the station.

Mr Arora called Hewings to check he would be paying the fare and then again when he wasn't at the station. He recorded both calls.

After the second call, he contacted his wife Nikki, also the taxi operator, to discuss his suspicions. She then spoke to the girl who admitted her family didn't know her plans.

Mrs Arora said: "When Satbir came back on the phone I started to panic and told him to lock the doors and not to let the girl out of the car or anyone take her out."

They alerted the police and their suspicions were proved correct.

Last week, Gloucester Crown Court jailed Hewings, 24, of Hadley Road, Cam, for five years after he admitted attempted abduction of the teenage girl, eight counts of making indecent images and one charge of distributing indecent images of children.

Sam Hewings has been jailed for five years for attempted abduction

When police arrested Hewings at his home they found a rucksack containing knives, duct tape and co-codamol tablets.

Online chat logs found in the search were presented to the court and "revealed Hewings' paedophilic tendencies and showed he had discussed kidnapping, sedating and raping a victim".

Mrs Arora said: "I'm really, really glad he [Mr Arora] voiced his concerns. We have three children, one of whom is a 13-year-old girl, the same age as the child involved.

"I hope that everyone in Satbir's position or a similar position, always remains vigilant so that other children do not fall into the same trap.

"I am just so glad that it was his taxi that child got into that morning. I still get chills and am haunted by what could have happened that day."

On Monday, Mr Arora was awarded a certificate for outstanding achievement in safeguarding by Cherwell.

Cllr Kieron Mallon, the council's lead member for public protection, said Mr Arora had put his safeguarding training into practice.

He said: "Online grooming is a continual menace which we cannot afford to be complacent about, and this shocking case reinforces the importance of the safeguarding training we provide to our taxi drivers.

"I can't praise Mr Arora enough for his caring attitude and for recognising his passenger was in grave danger.

"He saved his passenger from an unthinkable ordeal and had the presence of mind to record his calls with the would-be kidnapper, providing crucial evidence to the prosecution service."

DC Ian Bennett, of Gloucestershire Police, praised Mr Arora and said: "He undoubtedly saved harm from coming to the girl and provided vital evidence for the prosecution."

Satbir Arora was given a certificate to honour his outstanding achievement in safeguarding by Cherwell council leader Kieron Mallon after his quick-thinking saved the teenage girl from harm

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Gospel choir full of praise for competition

THE sweet sound of a harmonious Oxford choir has been rewarded by reaching the final of the BBC Songs of Praise, Gospel Choir of the Year competition.

Along with four other choirs from across the UK, the Oxford Gospel Events Choir (OGEC) filmed the final for the competition on November 5 at Westminster Central Hall in London.

The BBC1 programme is hosted by singer and vocal coach David Grant and has a judging panel consisting of singer-songwriter Seal, broadcaster and worship leader Muyiwa Olarewaju and award-winning gospel specialist Karen Gibson.

OGEC will sing in each of the two shows; the first was aired last Sunday while the second programme will be shown this Sunday at 4.15pm.

The judges will announce the winner of the competition once all the choirs have performed.

Choir director Jules Francis-Sinclair said: "It was such a privilege to get through to the finals of the competition and share the stage with some great UK gospel choirs.

"We had the most amazing experience with our choir family and we are very grateful for the huge amount of support our community choir, friends and family gave us."

OGEC is also gearing up for its annual Christmas concert on December 8/9 at Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford.

Proceeds will go to Sobell House Hospice, its chosen charity of the year.

InBrief

Death investigated

THE Independent Police Complaints Commission is investigating after a 25-year-old man died while in the hands of Thames Valley Police.

The man was arrested on suspicion of assault and died after becoming unwell in a police vehicle.

Police said the man suffered a "medical episode" on the way to custody in Abingdon at about 5.30am on Friday.

Officers stopped the vehicle at the entrance to Redbridge park-and-ride in Oxford, where the man was given medical treatment. He later died in hospital.

£1m for road traffic safety measures

OXFORDSHIRE will receive just over £1m to spend on traffic calming measures, safer pedestrian crossings or safer junctions for cyclists, pedestrians and drivers.

Last week's announcement from the Department of Transport is part of a £30m investment to improve road and cycle safety in towns and villages along the controversial HS2 route between London and the West Midlands.

HS2 Minister Paul Maynard said: "This money for Oxfordshire will see areas up and down the route benefit from high quality road and cycle safety projects to ensure that England's roads remain among the safest in the world."

Oxfordshire County Council will be given £1.1m while Warwickshire County Council received £8m, the biggest slice of funding.

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Fight the conmen and be a SCAMChampion

By George Welch

THE county council is on the look out for volunteers to join its army of 'SCAMChampions' in the battle against a rising number of scams across Oxfordshire.

Around 100 people have been trained by the council's trading standards team, with some qualifying as 'SCAMChampions', which means they can host their own sessions and raise awareness of local scams.

Reports of online scams to Citizens Advice in Oxford increased by 73 per cent in the past four years – and that relates only to online scams.

More traditional postal, phone scams and doorstep crime are also constantly evolving, making use of new technologies to access and share data about victims.

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has warned about a recent scam that involves scammers phoning Oxfordshire residents claiming to be from the HMRC.

The calls are coming from 020 numbers and claim that arrest warrants have been sent out for tax fraud.

Trading Standards operations manager Jody Kerman

The council said the con "is just the latest in a series of sophisticated scams designed to separate people from their money".

To combat the swindlers OCC has introduced free training and awareness sessions, available online and face-to-face, to provide people with the confidence and skills they need to identify and prevent scams.

Jody Kerman, operations manager for the county's trading standards department, said: "Scams affect the lives of millions of people across the UK.

"People who are scammed often experience loneliness, shame and social isolation.

"By completing the online learning, anyone can learn about the different types of scams and how to spot and support a victim."

The National Trading Standards is also offering free call blockers to any person living with dementia who is currently receiving scam or nuisance calls.

Applications for a free call blocker for people living with dementia can be made at friendsagainstscams.org.uk/callblocker

The initiatives have been launched as part of the Friends Against Scams campaign launched last year to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams.

OCC's trading standards has planned sessions for early 2018 and companies and organisations can also request a talk.

Contact the trading standards team at tinyurl.com/yb3t5has for more information.

Poet's words of wisdom at school extension opening

AWARD-WINNING local children's poet and non-fiction writer James Carter has officially opened a new classroom block and extension at West Kidlington Primary School.

The six-classroom block replaces four temporary classrooms built around 50 years ago, which were no longer fit to be used by the children.

Mr Carter visited the school with his guitar, Keith, and melodica, Steve, and helped the kids with their poetry skills before officially cutting the ribbon to open the new facility.

In addition to the six classrooms, which all include new furniture and interactive TV screen whiteboards, there are also disabled changing facilities and two additional rooms designed for small group teaching and learning.

The author of 12 poetry books for children and five creative writing books for teachers, Mr Carter described the school as "warm, creative and responsible".

He said: "I have never been greeted in 15 years by a 10-year-old boy with a note informing me that he really liked my poems.

"What does this say about the school? It tells me loud and clear the teachers are doing an incredible job motivating, encouraging and empowering young writers and readers."

Principal Simon Isherwood added: "It is so important to have quality and modern classrooms which reflect the values that we teach in the school.

"Our children can now be proud of the school that they learn in and we've already noticed a change in our pupils thanks to this improved environment."

Poet James Carter with children from West Kidlington Primary School

New homes help families to stay

By Samantha McGregor

A FAMILY are celebrating moving to their new home as part of a scheme making housing available to local people who are otherwise priced out of the market.

West Oxfordshire MP Robert Courts officially cut the ribbon to declare the 10-home scheme in Bury Close, Kingham, open.

The development, on a former domestic garden area, will give priority to those who live or work in Kingham who would otherwise be priced out.

Mr Courts said: "This fantastic scheme brings much-needed housing to local people. Everyone involved should be proud of what they have achieved."

Dragos and Doris Goga are among the first residents to move in with children Darius, seven, Albert, four and two-year-old Lina and are "delighted" with their new three-bedroom home.

Mrs Goga, who has worked as a carer in Kingham for seven years, said: "I love the house and the area. We used to live in Chipping Norton but there is more room for the children to play here."

Mr Goga added: "We are really impressed with the quality of the work and by the professionalism of everyone involved."

Cllr Colin Dingwall, cabinet member for housing at West Oxfordshire District Council, said: "This is an excellent example of how it is possible to provide affordable housing for local people.

"It has only been achieved through great teamwork across a range of partners and, most importantly, involving the local community."

Sovereign's chief operating officer Heather Bowman said: "There is a real need for this kind of affordable housing to help families stay connected to their local area.

"Only by working closely together with those living and working in our communities can we really make a difference and Bury Close is a fantastic example of what can be achieved to help our rural communities thrive."

From left, Cllr Colin Dingwall, Doris Goga, Dragos Goga, Robert Courts MP, Heather Bowman with children Lina and Darius Goga

InBrief

Health meeting

CAMPAIGNERS fighting to reopen a closed GP practice in Witney will hold a public meeting in the town tomorrow (Friday).

Residents are invited to the Corn Exchange at 7pm to discuss GP care in and around Witney.

The meeting will be hosted by the Deer Park Campaign Group and is separate from the two recent events lead by the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

GP care and services, Deer Park Medical Centre, the OCCG and the IRP Report, as well as other related concerns or questions, are on the agenda. No need to book a place.

Places are still available at another OCCG meeting at the Corn Exchange between 6.30pm and 8pm on December 7.

The health provider will share its findings on the primary care workshops in Witney and Carterton.

To book your place and get more information email cscsu.talkinghealth@nhs.net or call 01865 334638.

The winners are...

THE seventh annual Cherwell Business Awards have been officially launched and people have been urged to get nominating.

A new website dedicated to the awards has also been unveiled.

There are 10 categories in which to nominate people.

The deadline for applications is February 16, and winners will be announced at a gala dinner at Heythrop Park on Friday, May 11. For more information view cherwellbusinessawards.co.uk.

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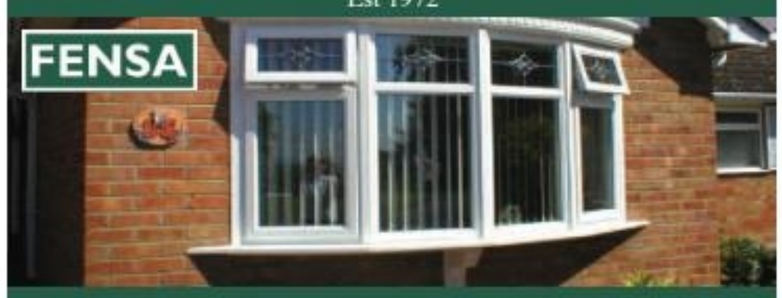

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RAF aircraft joins in search for sub

AN RAF aircraft from Brize Norton landed in Argentina last week to help with a rescue mission searching for a missing submarine.

The ARA San Juan and the 44 sailors on board lost contact with the Argentine navy on November 15 as the submarine sailed from the southern port of Ushuaia to Mar del Plata.

A Ministry of Defence (MoD) spokesperson confirmed last week that an RAF Voyager was sent from the west Oxfordshire air base to help locate the submarine, arriving in Argentina on Wednesday last week.

The ARA San Juan was still missing as we went to press.

RAF Brize Norton was granted £250,000 as part of the budget last week to renovate welfare facilities and provide a safe space for children, young people and their families.

Witney MP Robert Courts met the Minister for the Armed Forces, Tobias Ellwood, recently to raise concerns about the state of facilities for servicemen and women and their families on the base.

Mr Courts, who described the facilities as not being fit for purpose, said: "I am pleased the Chancellor has listened to the concerns of the community and this is an invaluable welcome investment in much-needed services and facilities. I shall continue to fight for improved housing – but this is a step in the right direction."

■ See pages 12&13 for more on the budget.

Students from The Warriner School won for the second year running in Victoria Prentis's competition

Pupils talk their way to debate victory

NORTH Oxfordshire pupils have been sharpening their debating skills for a cross-school challenge.

Earlier this month, Banbury and Bicester MP Victoria Prentis held her third annual Democracy Challenge, a debating competition for local secondary school pupils.

It was hosted at Cherwell District Council's Bodicote offices and teams battled it out in two rounds – debating social media abuse and the role of private providers in the NHS. The two highest scoring teams, Sibford and Warriner, then battled it out in a final debate on tuition fees.

The winners, for the second year running, were The Warriner School, the team was made up of Emily Thompson, Lucy Dunlop, Alfie Bullus and Daniel O'Toole.

Mrs Prentis was joined on the judging panel by other local elected officials and members of the community, including councillors, journalists and a Thames Valley Police inspector.

She said: "The Democracy Challenge is fast becoming one of the highlights of my calendar.

"I continue to be impressed by the high standard of debating, which improves year on year.

"The Warriner were a formidable team, but everyone who participated made some really excellent and thought-provoking contributions."

InBrief

Homes approved

PLANS to build 85 new homes – including 35 per cent affordable - in Ambrosden have been approved.

The development, which ranges from one-bed flats to five-bedroom homes, will be built on farm land near Springfield Farm development and will include a play area, ponds, tree planting and green spaces.

Cherwell District Council approved the application last month.

Fairytale Santa

SANTA Claus will be parking his sleigh at Fairytale Farm, near Chipping Norton, ready for visitors.

The farm which caters for disabled children and their families, is operating pre-booked Father Christmas visits this year because the event has become so popular.

As well as Santa's grotto, people can enjoy festive fun and the farm's usual activities.

For more information or to book view fairytalefarm.co.uk

Local plan views

ADDITIONAL papers are available as part of the consultation over West Oxfordshire District Council's local plan. The council said it has submitted three additional evidence papers for consultation.

The deadline for comments is December 20. For more information go to westoxon.gov.uk/localplan2031

Pair jailed over assault and cruelty to children

By Eva Astreinidou

A COUPLE who assaulted and subjected children to 'extreme cruelty' over four years have been sent to prison for a total of 11 years.

Andrew Clent, 30, of Mercury Close, Bampton, and Lisa Pratt, 36, of the same address, were convicted of offences following a two-week trial.

Between July 2011 and April 2015 Clent and Pratt wilfully assaulted, ill-treated and neglected two children, causing them both physical and psychological harm in Witney, west Oxfordshire.

On April 7, 2015 Pratt assaulted a third child at a barbecue by kicking the child in the ribs and shoulder, causing bruising to his torso.

Pratt and Clent were charged in connection with the offences on January 23 this year.

Pratt was sentenced to seven years after she was convicted of two counts of cruelty to a person under 16 years and one count of assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

Clent was sentenced to four years after he was convicted of two counts of cruelty to a person under 16 years.

Both Pratt and Clent were acquitted of a further count of cruelty to a person under 16 years following the trial in October at Oxford Crown Court.

Lisa Pratt and Andrew Clent have beens entenced to a total of 11 years for what the NSPCC has called 'sustained cruelty'

Detective Constable Rebecca McLeod, of the Oxfordshire Child Abuse Investigation Unit, said: "The victims in this case were subjected to acts of extreme cruelty, the memories of which will have a lasting effect throughout their lives.

"I hope that the verdict and sentences will enable the victims to move on with their lives and put this behind them. I would also like to thank the witnesses in this case who attended court and provided evidence which contributed to these convictions."

Speaking following the sentencing, a spokesperson from children's safeguarding charity NSPCC, said: "It is truly shocking that any adult could be capable of the depraved acts that Clent and Pratt subjected their victims to and no child should have to suffer this horrendous abuse.

"This was sustained cruelty that will have deeply affected the children and it's vital that both brave victims are receiving all the continued support that they need."

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News

'Wind in the Willows' murder team praised

By George Welch

THE 'painstaking' and 'meticulous' investigative work by the team who caught the 'Wind in the Willows' murderer has been rewarded and praised as they received official commendations.

Four detectives and a staff member who worked tirelessly to solve the murder of art collector Adrian Greenwood were recognised at a ceremony last week, where Thames Valley Police Chief Constable Francis Habgood presented them with their awards.

Killer Michael Danaher was jailed for 34 years, despite officers initially having no idea who killed the book-seller in his Iffley Road home in April last year.

One of those commended, Superintendent Kevin Brown, said: "Most murder investigations take painstaking work to get their perpetrators and this was no exception.

"The fact that we started from an absolute zero in terms of suspect to a stranger offender charged within days is testament to the long hours, conscientious and tenacious all round investigation that took place throughout the whole investigation.

"To obtain a life sentence with minimum of 34 years – an exceptional sentence – also demonstrates the work of the team in securing and consolidating the overwhelming evidence and then providing the CPS with an extraordinarily simplified package of a very complex set of circumstances."

Police member of staff Seema Punj was rewarded for her meticulous analysis of evidence and comprehensive compilation of a timeline that proved 'pivotal' to prosecution.

Detective Sergeant Richard Earl was congratulated for his management and preparation of evidence and Detective Constable Jim Armitage received his commendation for his management, production and presentation of CCTV evidence.

Lastly, Detective Constable William Tippetts was recognised for his management of witnesses and evidence.

He said: "It is rewarding that following the team's meticulous investigation there was at least something positive for the victim's family, a very dangerous offender was imprisoned for life and another success for the whole investigative and prosecution team that as always works extremely effectively together to bring about convictions in these tragic cases."

The investigation into Danaher was the subject of a Channel 4 documentary that aired in July this year.

From left, DC William Tippetts, DS Richard Earl, Supt Kevin Brown, police staff member Seema Punj and DC Jim Armitage

Michael Danaher, left, was convicted of the murder of art collector Adrian Greenwood after a complex investigation last year

Dig deep for Cecily's Fund

A CHARITY founded in memory of an Oxfordshire student has set a £20,000 target to give African orphans a better life.

Cecily Eastwood, from Stonesfield, near Witney, was just 19 when she was killed in a car accident in Zambia in June 1997.

During her gap year Cecily had been teaching at a school in Zambia's Copperbelt region and running homework clubs for orphans in her spare time.

After her death Cecily's Fund was created to carry on the work she had begun in Zambia.

Since it was founded Cecily's Fund has helped more than 20,000 of Zambia's orphaned and vulnerable children.

This year, from December 1 to 14, Cecily's Fund will run a Christmas challenge, called Life After School, and is urging people to donate.

Over the fortnight it will share examples of how the charity has already helped youngsters, including Isaac, a talented artist, who was given business skills by Cecily's Fund and earned enough money through his artwork to attend medical school.

Cecily's Fund was set up by her parents Alison and Basil Eastwood after they saw how cash collected at her funeral, £6,500, was put to good use.

For more information or to help go to cecilysfund.org

Independents' day

THAME'S 60 independent traders will stage a Christmas Shopping Day on Saturday.

There will be more than 20 offers and activities available for shoppers, including freebies, discounts and drinks while you shop, and vouchers for money off.

The event has been organised by 21st Century Thame, a partnership between business, local organisations and the local authorities, including Thame Town Council.

Chairman Sue Martin-Downhill said: "We all love our independent shops that give Thame high street such a special flavour, and they all deserve our support at this, their most important trading time of the year."

Aung San Suu Kyi stripped of city freedom honour

By Samantha McGregor

OXFORD City Council has removed the Freedom of the City from Aung San Suu Kyi.

The cross-party motion was unanimously supported at a special council meeting in Oxford Town Hall on Monday.

The de facto leader of Myanmar was granted the Freedom of the City in 1997 because she "reflected Oxford's values of tolerance and internationalism" the council said.

But Aung San has been criticised by world leaders for her failure to address allegations of ethnic cleansing in the country.

Councillor Mary Clarkson, who proposed the motion, said: "We celebrated her for her opposition to oppression and military rule in Burma.

"Today we have taken the unprecedented step of stripping her of the city's highest honour because of her inaction in the face of oppression of the minority Rohingya population.

"The burning of their villages has been independently confirmed by satellite images, and the UN has called the situation 'a textbook example of genocide' – yet Aung San Suu Kyi has denied any ethnic cleansing and dismissed numerous claims of sexual violence against Rohingya women as 'fake rape'.

"Oxford has a long tradition of being a diverse and humane city and our reputation is tarnished by honouring those who turn a blind eye to violence.

"We hope that today we have added our small voice to others calling for human rights and justice for the Rohingya people."

It comes after St Hugh's College, Oxford, removed her portrait, and singer Sir Bob Geldof handed back his Freedom of the City of Dublin in protest saying he could not share the honour which is also held by Aung San.

Armed forces veterans help light up Christmas

THOUSANDS of people flocked to Banbury town centre to celebrate the start of Christmas in the town.

A host of activities were staged by Banbury Town Council on Saturday as part of the Christmas lights event which culminated with the big switch-on at 6pm followed by fireworks.

There was a fairground, seasonal market, Santa's grotto, free face painting and Christmas decoration workshop.

On stage there were performances by music, dance and choir groups as well as pantomime excerpts.

This year four of the town's war veterans joined town mayor Cllr Colin Clarke on stage outside the town council offices in Bridge Street, to press the button on the festive illuminations.

They were Lieutenant Bert Dowler, who served in the Second World War with the Royal Tank Regiment, Lance Corporal Mark Smith, an Afghanistan veteran who was with the Royal Anglian Regiment, Sergeant Steve Duffy, formerly of the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards, who served in the Falklands and Northern Ireland, and former Korean War radio telephonist Wally Foreman, who served in the Royal Navy aboard HMS Newfoundland.

Cllr Clarke said: "The Christmas lights switch-on is a magical moment that people of all ages look forward to.

"It launches the festive season in Banbury and people enjoy the build-up and seeing the lights come on.

"It is also an opportunity every year to highlight local people who have served the community.

"This year we paid tribute to our armed forces and it was an honour to stand beside people who have contributed so much."

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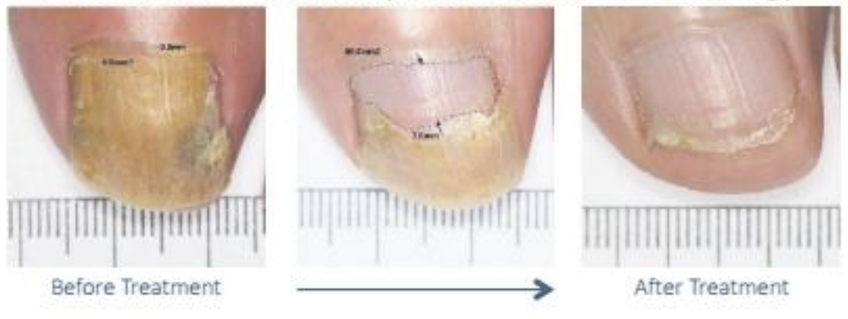

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News

‘No roads issue’ with drive-thru

By Samantha McGregor

THE decision whether to approve plans for a McDonald’s drive-thru in Bicester has taken a major step forward.

Tesco wants to build a two-storey fast food restaurant, on 548sqm of floor space, on land near its petrol station, at Lakeview Drive.

The application was submitted in April and has yet to be discussed by Cherwell District Council’s planning committee, but traffic concerns have been a major stumbling block.

The site, off the A41, is a main route into Bicester, access to designer outlet Bicester Village and Tesco.

It also has planning approval for a business park and a new retail park is due to be built nearby.

Oxfordshire County Council’s highways department had raised concerns the restaurant could cause more queuing at the A41 roundabout especially if there is a future increase in traffic at Tesco as the town expands.

But in the latest correspondence, the county council highway’s department say it has removed its objection to the development.

A letter from the highway’s senior transport planner Craig Rossington said: “My view is that the results now presented are based on a robust model and the degree of worsening as a result of the proposed development is small. As such the county council removes its objection to the development.”

It comes as the agent working on behalf of Tesco called on the council to approve the application.

In an email to the planning authority last week, Miles Young, a director at Buckingham-based Martin Robeson & Partners, called for the planning authority to “confirm the council’s position” and said: “We see no sustainable reason why the application cannot now be approved.”

The application has had a mixed response from residents, but many support the development.

Proposals for the restaurant include a 24/7 drive-thru facility, patio and play area, two-storey restaurant and 25 parking spaces.

It would create 70 full and part-time jobs.

Tesco opened at Lakeview Drive last year after relocating from its site in Pingle Drive thereby enabling Bicester Village to expand into its old site.

As part of the multi-million-pound deal, cash has been used to improve the road network in the area.

Cherwell District Council was unavailable to comment.

Bus staff swap uniforms for Santa suits

From left, Mandy Gillmore (snowlady), Tony Pomroy elf) and Paul Rouse (giant reindeer). To donate text BUUS57 followed by the amount you wish to give to 70070

ELVES, Rudolph, a snowman and even Santa will be spotted driving buses as a group of Stagecoach in Oxfordshire employees take part in a fancy dress day.

Drivers from Oxford, Witney and Banbury will be on the bus dressed as their favourite Christmas helper from tomorrow’s first shift at 4am.

The day will raise money for Cowley-based children and young adults’ hospice Helen & Douglas House, as well as promoting its Santa Run on December 10.

In its third year of supporting the charity, Stagecoach drivers will donate cash to take part in the event and passengers are urged to contribute via text should they spot one of the festive folk on the bus.

Driver Tony Pomroy, who lives in Abingdon, said: “We might be dressing up as festive heroes today but the staff, families and patients at Helen & Douglas House are heroes every single day and this is just a fun and festive way of raising money to say thank you to them.

“Santa swapping his sleigh for a bus isn’t something you see everyday.”

Lucy Walker, community fundraiser at Helen & Douglas House, said: “We try to make Christmas a special time for our young patients and their families, so they can create happy memories.

“We look forward to seeing Santa and his helpers on the daily commute.”

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Cycle challenge to raise funds to help fight her dad's disease

By Samantha McGregor

THE daughter of a former university lecturer, who has watched Alzheimer's disease take over her father, is helping to fight the condition.

Bethan Watts has so far raised £1,300 in just two weeks by taking on a cycling challenged organised by Alzheimer's Research UK.

Former Oxford Brookes University lecturer Peter George, who taught sociology and social policy, retired at 55, but at the age of 73 he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

Now his daughter Bethan has pledged to ride 300-miles by the end of January in one of two cycling challenges.

Alzheimer's Research UK's new initiative, Cycling Down Dementia, asks people to ride either 300 or 1,000 miles by the end of January to raise cash for dementia research.

Bethan said by signing up for the event, she felt she was doing something for her dad.

She said: "The first time dad forgot who we were was a horrible time for us. It was a huge shock. That's really when you start grieving.

"Today, he is completely immobile. Somebody has to feed him. His body has literally forgotten how to work."

The 47-year-old said she had wanted to do something to help fund research into Alzheimer's for some time, as there are currently no effective treatments for the disease.

She said: "Dementia is the underdog in terms of research, and it's also the condition that has the biggest impact on health and social care services.

"Compared to cancer, research into dementia is underfunded, which is why I wanted to raise money for Alzheimer's Research UK."

Kenneth Foreman, senior sporting events manager for Alzheimer's Research UK, said: "We would like to thank Bethan for her fundraising efforts. To have raised this huge amount of money in such a short time is an incredible feat.

"There are more than 850,000 people in the UK living with dementia and this number is set to rise. That is why it's so important that we work together to end the fear, harm and heartbreak of dementia. The vital funds raised from Cycling Down Dementia will power world-class dementia research projects helping to shape our understanding of the condition and open the door to new treatments."

So far 460 cyclists have already signed up, anyone else interested in joining the challenge should go to cyclingdowndementia.org

Bethan Watts and her dad Peter George on her wedding day in 2003 and inset, taking on the 300-mile cycle ride to raise funds for Alzheimer's disease

InBrief

Pesticide restrictions

BANBURY MP Victoria Prentis welcomed plans for further restrictions on the use of pesticides harmful to bees and other pollinators.

The Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Michael Gove announced the change after advice from UK's pesticides advisory body.

Mrs Prentis said: "Bees have been a big issue since I was first elected.

"Nearly 200 constituents have taken the time to contact me to express concerns about the impact of pesticides on bees.

"As the proud owner of three hives, I understand the importance of ensuring the safety of pollinators across the UK and the positive environmental impact they have."

Give a toy and help

AN annual toy appeal has been launched this week to ensure the town's poorest families get a visit from Santa Claus this Christmas.

The Mayor's Annual Toy Appeal runs until tomorrow and means children who wouldn't normally receive presents will wake up on Christmas Day to find parcels waiting to be opened.

Toys, suitable for boys and girls aged from baby to teenager, can be dropped at Banbury Town Hall by midday tomorrow (Friday).

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News

‘Brunel’ backs calls to stop investing in fossil fuels

CAMPAIGNERS dressed as 19th century engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel have called on the county council to stop investing in fossil fuels.

Brunel Fossil Free Oxfordshire activists gathered at county hall ahead of a meeting of the new Brunel Pension Partnership.

The council’s pension fund committee recently adopted a new investment strategy ahead of joining the partnership, a new pension pool with other authorities, from April.

Andrew Finney, dressed as Brunel, said: “If Brunel was around today he’d be building trains powered by renewable electricity, not steam trains.

“Investing in coal and oil now would be like Brunel investing in horse drawn carriages. It flies in the face of efforts locally to reduce emissions.”

Earlier in November it was revealed the council’s pension fund had invested almost £133million in the fossil fuel industry which the group said threatened the climate and represented an unacceptable risk to pension holders.

A county council spokesperson said: “Legal opinion obtained by the national Shadow Scheme Advisory Board states that the first duty of all Pension Fund Committees is to the membership of the scheme and that they cannot place ethical and other social, environmental and governance factors above the requirement to maximise the investment returns for a given level of risk.”

Sam Coates from Oxford, Andrew Finney from Didcot and Alan Allport from Oxford

Care home refused for second time

By Samantha McGregor

A PLANNING committee which was pulled-up by a developer after it refused its proposal for a care home has thrown out the plans for a second time.

LNT Care Developments and Greenlight Developments want to build a 64-bed care home, car park and provide public open space at land off Skimmingdish Lane and Buckingham Road, which is used for run-off water relating to the nearby Southwold housing estate.

Officers had recommended the plan for approval, but last week councillors rejected the scheme again.

Cherwell District Council’s planning committee first discussed the application in October and refused planning permission.

However, one of the applicants sent a letter criticising the council for offering “no specific reasons for refusal” and the process was “flawed”.

The council took legal advice and agreed to re-publicise it and last week it was brought back before the committee.

Last week’s meeting heard concerns had been raised by members of the public after the site was cleared of vegetation shortly after the last committee meeting was held.

Planning officer Bob Duxbury pointed out the clearance of a site does not need planning permission so there has been no breach of condition.

But he said the council’s ecologist reported the developer “didn’t use best practice”.

Cllr Sean Gual, who is opposed to the development, told the meeting the site had been put forward as a district wildlife site.

But after the care home plans were refused, he said “the next day the developers sent in their diggers, their trucks and their machinery and tore up the land. I think we would struggle to argue about it being a district wildlife site now.”

He urged the committee “not to be bullied and change its mind”.

Dr Pamela Roberts, wildlife campaigner, said the developer carried out a “destructive search for lizards after planning permission was refused”.

However, the developer’s agent said it had done nothing wrong and had moved common lizards to “better habitat within site” in line with guidance.

He argued there was a “need for a care home” in Bicester due to its increasing population.

InBrief

Water warning

OXFORD has been classed as “seriously water stressed” by the Environment Agency.

Thames Water says this means there needs to be a proactive campaign to help conserve water in the area to ensure there’s enough to meet growing demand.

The company says it is running a number of initiatives to reduce leakage on the city’s pipes – including using listening devices to detect water escaping from the network.

Residents are also being asked to take shorter showers of four minutes and install water saving devices on taps, showers and in toilets.

Christmas at Quay

A HOST of festive fun is set to take place at Banbury’s Castle Quay Shopping Centre from Saturday.

Father Christmas and his wonderland grotto will be in place at Banbury Museum, while on Sunday, from 11am to 4pm, shoppers can meet three friendly reindeer and sit in Santa’s sleigh outside the Cherwell entrance to Castle Quay.

Late night shopping launches today and shops in the centre will stay open until 8pm on Thursdays.

A visit from an animatronic polar bear takes place on December 7, while a giant snow globe will be in place on Sunday, December 10.

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News

Stamp duty axe is a drop in the ocean, says MP

OPINIONS were split after the announcement that stamp duty would be axed on properties up to £300,000 for first-time buyers.

This comes as Chancellor Philip Hammond announced this year's budget last Wednesday, pledging to boost house building and offer incentives for first-time buyers.

And while the Oxford East Conservative Association (OECA) and west Oxfordshire MP Robert Courts welcomed the decision, Oxford East MP Anneliese Dodds, *pictured*, said it is merely a 'drop in the ocean'.

After the announcement, a report by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) suggested that first-time buyers could be made worse off, under the assumption that property prices will rise.

Labour MP Ms Dodds added: "OBR has suggested that the policy is only likely to enable three and a half thousand people to own their own homes; a drop in the ocean compared to the step-change we really need to see.

"It has also been suggested that the measure could drive up the cost of housing – which is the last thing we need to see here in Oxford."

The new measure announced last week means that for properties costing up to £500,000, no stamp duty will be paid on the first £300,000.

This means that buyers will be saving £5,000 on houses priced £400,000-£500,000.

Mr Hammond said this meant 95 per cent of first-time buyers would see stamp duty cut, while 80 per cent would pay none at all.

OECA vice-president Mark Bhagwandin said the move will encourage home ownership, adding: "Oxford's current housing crisis needs to be urgently addressed and initiatives to resolve this issue both at a national and local level are needed."

Witney MP Mr Courts said the change will make a real difference for people in the area.

He said: "The abolition of stamp duty is a major boost for first-time buyers."

Boost for driverless cars

THE UK could become a world leader in driverless cars, after the government promised extra money would be set aside for the 'ground-breaking' industry.

Oxford-based Oxbotica, a technology firm, welcomed the support from central government, saying autonomous vehicles will 'undoubtedly change society'.

This comes after Chancellor Philip Hammond announced there would be regulatory changes and financial support to help fulfil the UK's potential in the driverless industry.

Speaking after the announcement, Oxbotica CEO Graeme Smith said: "This support demonstrates that the government continues to be serious about ensuring the UK is an amazing place to develop autonomous vehicle technology.

The ground-breaking research being undertaken by us here at Oxbotica would not be possible without funding from central government."

In the plans, the government set a target that will see fully self-driving cars, without a human operator, on UK roads by 2021.

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) will also help determine how future roadbuilding should adapt to support self-driving cars.

Earlier this month, Mr Smith and Professor Paul Newman, director of the Oxford Robotics Institute (ORI), drove one of the cars to Downing Street and demonstrated the technology behind it all for Theresa May and Mr Hammond.

Mr Smith added: "Government support here has the potential to be repaid many times over, in terms of new, high-skilled jobs, enormous export potential, and improved productivity."

"We want to build a Britain that is fit for the future with the homes our country needs, so everyone can afford a place to call their own. That's why we are investing up to £215m into Oxfordshire, to support an ambitious housing deal that will deliver 100,000 new homes in an area of high demand"

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid

"Oxfordshire is getting its act together to meet the real challenges of economic growth and providing homes for the people of Oxfordshire, now and for future generations.

"Now we need to quickly provide government with a credible plan for housing growth to get the cash.

"Longer term we need to produce a 'spatial plan' that recognises the importance of planning for jobs, homes and transport for Oxfordshire as a whole.

"For the first time, the different parts of Oxfordshire and the different interest groups within it will need to agree a vision for the future of the whole county that is in all our interests"

Oxfordshire County Council leader Ian Hudspeth

"...we have agreed an ambitious housing plan with Oxfordshire to deliver 100,000 homes by 2031, capitalising on the global reputations of our two most famous universities and Britain's biggest new town to create a dynamic new growth corridor for the 21st century"

Chancellor Philip Hammond in his budget speech referring to the National Infrastructure Commission report on the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor

'£215m is a good start but more needed to build infrastructure'

By George Welch

THE government's £215million package towards housing, infrastructure and productivity in Oxfordshire 'doesn't go far enough', according to a district council leader who wants more investment to support homes.

Matthew Barber, leader of the Vale of White Horse District Council, believes the £150m earmarked for infrastructure would only be a fraction of the total needed to support more homes across the county.

Speaking after the budget announcement last week, Mr Barber said: "While I welcome the investment from the government, I think we all recognise it doesn't really go far enough.

"£150m of infrastructure spending in Oxfordshire spread over five years is pretty small sums of money compared with the level of housing we're looking to deliver.

"Oxfordshire councils have jointly come up with a plan for infrastructure and we think we need more than £7bn of funding to bridge that gap. What this will deliver is less than two per cent of that."

The Vale is already planning to build 22,000 houses by 2031 but, according to the authority's leader, has "no plans for increasing housing numbers unless we receive commitments to fixing infrastructure".

Oxford West and Abingdon MP Layla Moran criticised how the 100,000 homes by 2031 target "is not matched by enough funding for the infrastructure to go with it".

Oxford East representative Anneliese Dodds told the BBC she also felt the money "was not as much as I would have liked".

Oxfordshire grew 30 per cent between 2009 and 2015 – the fastest growing area in the country in cash terms.

Chancellor Philip Hammond used last week's budget to announce the £215m package over the next five years to build homes and infrastructure in Oxfordshire.

It includes a commitment to the East West rail route between Oxford and Cambridge with the first trains running in 2023 and money to speed up housebuilding across the county.

Bob Price, leader of the Oxfordshire Growth Board and Oxford City Council, said: "We have huge problems of affordable housing and congestion and what these funds are doing is tackling these in a very effective way."

However, Oxfordshire was already gearing up for 100,000 houses as part of district councils' Local Plans, so last week's announcement is not more homes than previously expected.

According to Caroline Green, the city council's assistant chief executive, somewhere between 95 and 98.5 per cent of homes have been located, with a maximum of 5,000 homes yet to be situated.

Vale of White Horse District Council leader Matthew Barber, Oxford West and Abingdon MP Layla Moran and Oxford City Council leader Bob Price have all welcomed the £215million for Oxfordshire

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THE LADBROKES TROPHY

The Hennessy Gold Cup meeting has long been regarded as one of the highlights of the racing and social calendar at Newbury Racecourse. This year the race is back, bigger than ever, but with a new sponsor: Ladbrokes and a new title: the Ladbrokes Trophy. The change in sponsor will only enhance the meeting with the Ladbrokes Trophy receiving a £50,000 boost in prize money, making it jump racing's second most valuable handicap after the Grand National, as well as other non-racing entertainment.

In recent years the Hennessy Gold Cup has produced winners such as Grand National winner, Many Clouds, Cheltenham Gold Cup contenders Native River and Smad Place, and racing legend, Denman. The meeting has also provided wins for horses such as Coneygree and Thistlecrack.With increased prize money the Ladbrokes Winter Carnival is likely to deliver even better racing, adding even more quality to what is already regarded as one of the best loved meetings of the racing year.

THIS YEAR THE RACE IS BACK, BIGGER THAN EVER, BUT WITH A NEW SPONSOR: LADBROKES AND A NEW TITLE: THE LADBROKES TROPHY.

Alongside the top-quality racing there will be a host of additional off-the-track activities including live music, street performers and a shopping village, alongside award winning catering – the Racecourse was named Racecourse Caterer of the Year in 2016. The meeting has also become known as one of the social occasions of the winter graced in recent years by Hollywood 'A' listers Eddie Redmayne, Stanley Tucci and Carey Mulligan, comedians Jennifer Saunders and Rob Brydon, actors James Nesbitt and James Norton, musicians Tinie Tempah, Molly King and Melanie Chisolm (Mel C) and sports stars Victoria Pendleton and Denise Lewis. The 2016 trophy was presented by HRH Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall.

Whether you're coming for the racing or the social occasion the Ladbrokes Winter Carnival is sure to deliver a great day out. Don't miss out, book your tickets today! For more info visit: **www.newburyracecourse.co.uk**

Walking 45 million steps in three months

OFFICE workers from Oxford, Switzerland and the USA joined forces to literally walk millions of steps for charity.

More than 65 staff from The Oxford PharmaGenesis, a health science communications firm, and its branches in Philadelphia and Basel, walked a total of 45 million miles on a three-month challenge.

It was the equivalent of walking the combined distance from Oxford to Basel and Oxford to Philadelphia more than five times.

The team raised more than £3,000 for Diabetes UK who organised the One Million Step challenge which took place between July and September.

People were challenged to push themselves out of their comfort zone by taking one million steps over three months and getting sponsored for every stride.

Medical writer Lucy Ambrose walked more than 2.5m steps and made Diabetes UK's top 15 leader board for most steps taken.

Lucy said: "I walked everywhere for three months. I feel fitter and thanks to this unique challenge, walking is now a habit.

"Desk culture can mean hours sitting down so this gave us an opportunity to get out at lunchtime and maximise our step count for a great cause."

Dr Chris Winchester, Oxford PharmaGenesis' managing director said: "I enjoyed walking my million steps – I encourage other local employers to take part next year."

Playscheme to take summer off

A PLAYSCHEME which has run for 10 years offering free summer fun for children across Thame will not take place in 2018.

Run by Lighthouse Thame and Villages the initiative has grown year on year to welcome hundreds of children for the week.

Lighthouse is a partnership with churches in Aylesbury, Thame, Haddenham and the surrounding villages.

The scheme was launched in 2008 with just 300 children and 280 helpers.

This summer 1,000 children attended the event and 500 people helped out.

But the Lighthouse committee has made the decision to cancel the playscheme for 2018 to enable members to concentrate on a review of its governance and administration.

However, it has pledged to return in 2019. In a statement, the committee said: "The fantastic volunteer team enabled it to grow – not just in numbers but in fun, creativity and many other ways too. The systems set up 10 years ago now need to be reviewed to make sure the success of Lighthouse continues into the future.

"Consequently, the Lighthouse committee has identified the need to refresh various elements of Lighthouse, including how the week itself runs and its administration.

"It is also time to set up new governance arrangements that meet the needs of a growing charity. This will involve a very significant amount of work, which needs to be the focus for the coming year.

"The committee has come to the difficult decision they are unable to run Lighthouse in 2018 at the same time as making these essential changes.

"It will mean their future has every opportunity to be even better, while continuing to be the safe and fun environment that it has always been."

The statement said the decision had not been taken lightly, and that it had been given "unanimous support" by "key church leaders".

Schools among national top performers

TWO schools in Oxfordshire featured in the Sunday Times' national ranking of top performing schools.

Magdalen College in Oxford came third, while St Helen and St Katharine in Abingdon ranked number 10 in the top list for independent secondary schools in the south east. The girls school also rose six places in the national rankings to 19th overall.

The 25th edition of rankings, published last weekend, identifies the 2,000 highest-achieving schools in the UK, ranked by their recent examination results.

£1m appeal to help stop epilepsy death

By Samantha McGregor

A WANTAGE-based charity has launched a £1m life-saving appeal to help prevent sudden death in young people with epilepsy.

Charity Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy, SUDEP, launched the four-year project earlier this month with support from Wantage MP Ed Vaizey, who is also the charity's president.

Called Prevent21, the campaign aims to raise £1m, as well as awareness of the condition, educate people and highlight how "lives are being unnecessarily cut short by epilepsy each year".

SUDEP was set up by Jane Hanna in 1996 after the death of her then partner Alan.

She said: "While this fight is not new, we do now know that many of these sudden deaths can actually be avoided, if people were being told about their risks.

"We are working tirelessly to help people with epilepsy, their families and clinicians, to do what they can to reduce risks now.

"By joining our fight through the Prevent21 appeal, we can move ahead to stop these sudden and tragic young deaths."

The charity says every week in the UK 21 people die from epilepsy, while in the past 21 years, more than 21,000 people with epilepsy have died suddenly.

Jim Convery, MD of Oxfordshire Explosive Learning Solutions; Ed Vaizey MP; Cath Convery, the learning lead with Barrie and Jan Burns

Barrie and Jan Burns, who lost their 10-year-old son Charlie after he had two seizures within days of each other in 2011, set themselves a target to raise £21,000 for the appeal in their son's memory.

The couple said: "What happened to Charlie should not happen to anyone, and the hole he has left in our lives will never be filled. But we have vowed as a family to turn his death into something positive.

"By working with SUDEP since his death, and by supporting their Prevent21 appeal, we truly hope many lives are going to be saved."

Mr Vaizey said: "This appeal is such an important one both nationally and here in the local community. The fact that so many young lives are being cut short, when SUDEP Action have tools and information to help people with epilepsy reduce their risks, is an utter tragedy."

For more information go to www.sudep.org/prevent21

News

Family support group holds its first fundraiser

FAMILIES are being invited to join a day of festive fun to raise cash for a new support service.

Organised by the new Grove & Wantage family community group, GroW, the Christmas fair on Saturday is the group's first fundraising event.

Taking place at St John's Church, in Grove, from 10am to 3pm, there will be a host of activities including festive food, handmade crafts and a chance to win raffle prizes including café vouchers, a photo shoot and gym membership.

There will also be activities for children including a stay and play area.

Office manager Michelle Rozier said: "We have been providing vital support for families with young children in the Grove and Wantage area by successfully delivering open access groups on a weekly basis. We are looking forward to welcoming familiar and new faces to the first GroW Christmas Fair and I'd like to thank all of the local businesses that have provided great prizes for our raffle.

"We are hoping that fundraising events such as this will help us extend our current services as well as future proof the classes that are already in place."

Students' coats campaign to help homeless keep warm this winter

By George Welch

The Witney Level 2 Business students launching the #100coats campaign

CARING college students are hoping to warm up winters for the homeless by delivering 100 coats and jackets to those in need within the community.

Business students at Abingdon & Witney College's Witney campus launched the #100coats project as part of a module on their course.

The group is now aiming to get at least 100 donations of men's winter coats or jackets in clean and good condition by December 13.

Men's clothing was specifically chosen because statistically they are in much more demand – men make up 80 per cent of homeless people.

The students are also asking donors to attach a luggage tag to the clothes, in order to deliver a kind message to the unknown recipient.

Business lecturer Tracey Lee, who is helping to oversee the project, said: "It's really important for our business students to gain real-life practical and employability experience to support their academic studies.

"I'm incredibly proud of their commitment to #100coats campaign which will help keep local homeless people warmer this winter."

The students will work with the Oxford Homeless Pathways charity to help distribute the clothing, while Witney business suppliers Aston & James will sponsor the campaign by acting as a storage and collection point.

Already the students have had support from local organisations, including three schools.

Julie Hunter, deputy headteacher at the Aureus School in Didcot, said: "Aureus School students are supporting the #100coats campaign as we have embarked on a 14-week long acts of kindness challenge.

"We feel at this time of year in particular it is important to be kind to our local community. We are hopeful we can help this enterprising task."

For anyone interested in donating, Aston & James is willing to collect sizeable clothing donations.

Smaller clothing donations can be dropped off at their office premises in Witney, in De Havilland Way, or at the college's Witney campus, on Holloway Road, Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

Good service steers bus company to award glory

Oxford Bus Company's Luke Marion, finance and commercial director and Ray Woodhouse, engineering director

AN Oxfordshire bus company scooped a national award for its outstanding service and use of technology to drive improvements.

Judges awarded the Oxford Bus Company bronze in the Top Shire Operator category at the industry-coveted UK Bus Awards last week.

Oxford Bus Company finance and commercial director Luke Marion said the award was "testament to the intense hard work, dedication and service of all of our staff".

He added: "It is also recognition of the vision of the company and the fact we embrace change and constantly evolve to ensure we deliver the best possible service to our customers.

"We have invested almost £9million into new buses, technology, customer convenience and staff welfare in the past year, to ensure we continue to innovative."

The firm will put on more services over the festive period to deal with Boxing Day sales at the Westgate. Visit oxfordbus.co.uk/Christmas for more information.

Wildlife group has green advice for businesses

A WILDLIFE charity is leading the way to help businesses improve their green credentials.

Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, BBOWT, will host a mini conference setting out innovative ways Oxfordshire firms can help save the environment.

The event, called Turning Over a New Leaf – Improving Approaches to Corporate Social Responsibility in 2018 – takes place at the Saïd Business School at Egrove Park, Oxford, on January 25.

Tom Beckett, BBOWT's director of external affairs, said: "A healthy natural environment is fundamental to all our lives and businesses. Clean water, natural flood defences, carbon sequestration, good air quality, healthy soils producing nourishing food, a sustainable supply of raw materials and beautiful places to live and work, are all benefits from nature that is in decline."

Speakers include Mike Barry, head of plan A at Marks & Spencer and Simon Eves, head of sustainability at Panasonic UK.

For more information or to book a place view bbowt.org.uk

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News

A knockout way to start raising funds for 2018

By George Welch

THE early bird catches the worm, so they say, and that's certainly the school of thought Andy Baker subscribes to.

It might not even be Christmas yet, but the founder of Didcot-based fundraising group Play2Give, our charity of the year, already has his sights set on next year's fundraising fun.

Andy, 29, is looking forward to adding inflatable madness to the billing for 2018 in the form of an adaptation of the It's A Knockout game show.

The new event, It's A P2G Knockout!, will take place in the spring at Oxford Harlequins RFC and raise funds for P2G's main benefactors – Headway Oxfordshire and the Oxford Children's Hospital.

Andy, who is appealing for a sponsor for the event, said: "At P2G we are always looking at ways to be innovative and expand our range of fundraising and events.

"It's a Knockout is a perfect way to bring the entire community together and have some wacky fun along the way. I hope local businesses, schools groups and members of the public will unite to take part to enter and have a knockout of a time for two incredibly important charities."

Up to 10 teams of 10 will battle it out in a wide variety of activities run by professionals Chilli Sauce.

Registration is not yet officially open but interest can be declared and places reserved by emailing play2give@hotmail.com.

Teams can enter for £500 – or £50 per person – and are encouraged to raise additional funds.

Funds for Headway Oxfordshire support the Kennington charity's current appeal to raise £30,000 for its specialist neurological physiotherapy gym at the centre, the first of its kind in the voluntary sector.

The Ronald McDonald House in Oxford is raising funds towards an £11million purpose-built three-storey 62-bedroomed house, which will be based on the John Radcliffe site.

To sponsor the event, email Catya Mulholland at events@headway-oxford.org.uk

To donate to P2G's 10th anniversary appeal, which has raised more than £16,000 so far this year, visit tinyurl.com/zksd8xx

Mark Calkin from Emerald Cube, left, demonstrates their product to students

Business advice for students

A GROUP of autistic students met entrepreneurs from Oxfordshire to help plan for their futures.

Two Oxfordshire-based entrepreneurs and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership joined forces earlier this month to host the workshop at LVS Oxford.

The session allowed students on the autism spectrum to consider different career options and map out how to acquire the additional knowledge and skills needed to achieve their long-term goals.

OxLep's skills and enterprise adviser Susan Ledgard-Hoile said: "It was a real pleasure to work with the students at LVS Oxford. They were very engaged, asking intelligent, challenging questions, and demonstrated a real interest in the subjects."

Mark Calkin, technical director of Oxford-based Emerald Cube talked through projects his company had undertaken to take the internet to difficult environments.

Locally-based fashion designer and shop owner Julia Cook revealed she didn't do well academically but was always creative and determined to start her own businesses.

InBrief

Anniversary cheer

Tayyaba Hameed, Elise Benjamin and founder Shabnam Sabit

A CHARITY which cooks meals for the homeless community celebrated its second anniversary.

The Oxford Homeless Project and its army of volunteers threw a feast to remember at the Asian Cultural centre off Manzil Way earlier this month, welcoming residents and local councillors to mark the day.

Born out of her desire to help others during Ramadan, Shabnam Sabir started the project, which feeds around 50 homeless people every fortnight with a hot meal.

That number is expected to increase as winter draws nearer.

House burglary

A PATIO door was smashed during a burglary in Oxford last week.

Officers said items were stolen from a Rosamund Road home but did not specify what was taken in the break-in between 8am and 6.30pm on Wednesday last week.

If you have any information, call 101 quoting reference 43170348467.

Its official.

Hearing aids can do more than improve your hearing.

Following a survey carried out in 2015 by Anovum (a market research company) on 1325 hearing impaired people (605 hearing aid wearers and 720 not wearing hearing aids). The survey reports that hearing aids not only improve capabilities of hearing well but also improved the general health of hearing aid wearers compared to hearing impaired people who do not wear a hearing aid. Hearing aid users are less likely to think they have the symptoms of dementia, feel less physically and mentally exhausted, sleep better and are less likely to suffer from depression.

The survey confirms what some Audiologists have suspected for some time, that hearing aids are not only good for correcting hearing loss but in fact contribute to better and more active lives, better quality of life, and better overall health.

For the hearing impaired workers who wear a hearing aid it is reported that their hearing aids are useful for their job and that the hearing aids also increase the chance of them getting promoted, being in the right job and getting more salary compared to those hearing impaired people who have not obtained hearing aids.

The full report can be found at EuroTrak UK 2015 – ehima

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DIXON'S FINE ART

Are coming to Oxfordshire for 4 days in December.

INSTANT TOP CASH PRICES PAID

Experts from Dixon's Fine Art will be visiting Oxford area to carry out free valuations over a period of four days

If you have ever wondered what that old family heirloom is worth, put in your diary December 4th and 5th at Cotswold Lodge Hotel in Oxford or pop down to Hawkwell House Hotel, Iffley on 6th and 7th December.

Free valuations and cash offers will be given from 10am until 5pm each day—there is no break for lunch, so go along at any time.

Respected dealer, Anthony Wadey, of Dixon's Fine Art (formerly Castle Antiques), is well established in works of art and antiques, with the trade being handed down from his grandfather, then to his father, before he took on the business.

Dixon's Fine Art has been carrying out free valuations all around the country for more than 45 years and will be at the Cotswold Lodge Hotel and Hawkwell House Hotel for free valuations and offers with no obligation to sell.

It is worth noting that auction rooms may take up to 30 per cent of the sale price of your item, whereas Dixon's Fine Art will give you 100 per cent in cash, there and then — there's no transaction too large or too small.

Anthony is already anticipating meeting new clients: "I am very much excited and looking forward to meeting old and new clients in this lovely Oxfordshire area and for them to bring along as many items of interest."

Ladies should take a look in their jewellery boxes for any old or broken rings, chains, odd earrings, items with stones missing or costume marcasite jewellery —there could be a pleasant surprise. Gents should check for old cufflinks, cigarette boxes, lighters, medals, coins, pocket watches, fountain pens, penknives, radios and sporting-related equipment.

Old paintings and watercolours, in any condition, framed or not, are also of interest. As are antique clocks, Moorcroft pottery, tortoiseshell items, bronze figures, coloured glass, china vases and figures, carpets and rugs, postcard albums, silver or silver-plated tea or coffee sets, cutlery, silver and enamel items, ivories, teddy bears and old china dolls.

Quality wristwatches, watch movements and watchmaker's tools are also required.

So, check your lofts, cupboards and jewellery boxes and take your finds along to be valued.

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Long Queues Not Expected

News

Funding to help communication

By George Welch

MORE people across the country who can't speak due to a rare genetic condition will receive support after a charity won £25,000 in funding.

Nuneaton-based Angelman Syndrome Support Education and Research Trust (ASSERT) won the funding after being nominated by Abingdon trustee Andrea Baines.

The charity, which researches, educates and supports people with Angelman Syndrome, a rare genetic condition that is thought to affect around one in 20,000 in the UK, won the cash at the OneFamily Community Awards earlier this month.

The funding will be used to provide 50 families with augmented alternative communication systems (AAC).

This will enable those affected by Angelman Syndrome to communicate by learning a system of pictures and words on a tablet computer or book.

Andrea, who has a Child Trust Fund for her son Woody with financial services company OneFamily, put ASSERT forward for the award.

Woody, eight, has Angelman Syndrome and Andrea is a trustee of the charity.

She said: "You can't imagine how upsetting and frustrating it can be if you know that your child is sad or ill and you desperately want to help them, but they can't tell you what's wrong.

"These AAC systems can enable full, meaningful communication where it was previously thought that could never happen. For the families that use AAC, it's absolutely life changing – like Christmas every day."

She added: "We're still near the start of that journey with Woody, who was diagnosed with Angelman Syndrome in 2010.

"The benefits of AAC are already very well-understood, but it is rarely offered in the UK. We want to change this and make AAC use the norm for people with Angelman Syndrome."

ASSERT supports around 500 people with the condition.

The neurological disorder causes severe learning difficulties and, although those affected have a normal life expectancy, they need specialist care all their lives.

People with Angelman Syndrome are typically very happy and love to socialise, but most are unable to speak.

Guy French, corporate and customer strategy director at OneFamily, described ASSERT as a "truly inspirational organisation".

For more information visit onefamily.com/your-foundation/

Fantastic plastic recycling idea

A GROUP of volunteers have come up with a novel way of combating the problem of re-usable plastic bottles.

Sustainable Wantage has launched four detergent refill stations at its The Wantage Mix shop on Mill Street.

The community action group is offering sustainable laundry liquids, hand soap and washing-up liquid in an attempt to increase recycling. People will be charged by the litre.

Any container can be used for the detergents, from old plastic bottles to glass jars or milk cartons helping to reduce plastic packaging use.

Katie Herring, a volunteer helping to set-up the re-fill stations, said: "I love that you can pretty much refill using any container you've got lying around, giving it a new lease of life and stopping it going into landfill and damaging our environment.

"I can't wait to launch the stations at The Wantage Mix and start a refill revolution in my home town."

The products are supplied by SESI, which supplies detergent refills to business in Oxford and London and sells non-packaged food from its stall at the East Oxford Farmers' Market.

The project will be launched at the Dickensian evening tomorrow and afterwards customers wishing to use the refill stations can visit the shop on Mondays at 4pm-6.30pm and Wednesdays at 1pm-3pm.

SESI founders Paul and Rena with the detergents

InBrief

Fayre raises funds

ABINGDON Baptist Church welcomed the festive season with a Christmas fayre to help raise funds for its £650,000 redevelopment project.

More than 100 people attended the event in November, helping raise an impressive £2,000 through sales of children's books and games.

Councillor Monica Lovatt, deputy chairman of the Vale of White Horse District Council and the Rev Steve Millard, minister of the church, opened the event, which also featured a Christmas grotto.

So far the church redevelopment project has raised £400,000 of the required £650,000.

A new glass screen will be installed to make a larger welcome area and there will be a general revamp of the interiors.

Work is likely to start in 2018, and organisers are planning to move to a temporary home while work is in progress.

Choir's concert

DIDCOT Community Gospel Choir's fundraising concert this Christmas is in support of Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

Glad Tidings takes place at Benson Parish Hall at 5pm on December 9.

Tickets are priced at £8/£6 and can be bought from didcotgospel@gmail.com or 01235 834295.

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Out & About

War Horse rides into town

New Theatre gets ready to welcome Joey and friends

Take that Blenheim – look who's performing in summer concert?

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Out & About

War Horse rides into Oxford

By Samantha McGregor

Thomas Dennis plays Albert with puppeteers Tom Stacy, Lucas Button and Lewis Howard as Joey, pictured during the 2017/18 tour of War Horse Picture: %2

OXFORD'S New Theatre is just days away from the premiere of its Christmas show War Horse.

The National Theatre's must-see production of Michael Morpurgo's much-loved story opens on December 13 until January 6.

The tour of coincides with the centenary commemorations of the end of the First World War.

So far, the production has been seen by more than seven million people worldwide and has won 25 awards including the Tony Award for Best Play on Broadway.

War Horse is the story of courage, loyalty and friendship, following the life of a young boy called Albert and his horse Joey, and is set against the backdrop of the First World War.

It features ground-breaking puppetry work by South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company, which brings breathing, galloping horses to life on stage.

Ahead of the show opening in Oxford, Thomas Dennis, who plays Albert Narracott, spoke to us.

He said: "Albert is definitely one of the biggest challenges I've had to face so far as an actor, alongside Christopher in the Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.

"The first stages of preparation involved a lot of research. Fortunately, I ride horses in my spare time – in fact, one of my sports of choice is jousting – so I feel like I can bring that experience and knowledge to the character and the show.

"I embarked on a research trip across Northern France and the Western Front, following in the footsteps of Joey and Albert in the play.

"I believe this show to be a commemoration of all the men, women and horses that gave their lives in the Great War so to see the landscapes and read the names on the gravestones allows me to connect deeply to the subject matter of the piece."

He said working with the puppets had been a "blessing" and although he is aware of the puppeteers on stage, they just become Joey.

He added: "Our puppeteers on this show are so incredible. The detail of their work never ceases to amaze me and there is nothing more pleasurable for an actor than to work with puppets that respond as freely as animals do."

Thomas said marking the centenary this year made the show even more "poignant", he added: "I am honoured to be able to tell this story at such an important time."

Tickets from the New Theatre box office, by calling 0844 871 3020 or go to atgtickets.com/oxford

On stage

Getting on the road with the old geetar

Former Gillan and Ozzy Osbourne guitar legend Bernie Tormé is set to play Oxford's Bullingdon on Sunday.

Blues rock, psychedelic, glam punk sleaze rock frontman Bernie has enjoyed a long and remarkable career with hit records and world tours.

During his time with Gillan, he wrote and played on four top 10 albums while his trademark guitar is an intrinsic part of his biggest selling and best-known singles New Orleans and Trouble.

In the aftermath of Randy Rhoads' death Bernie stepped in to play for Ozzy Osbourne before going on to front his own band.

Bernie said: "Can't wait to go out with the old geetar and make some noise! This is your last chance to catch us in 2017."

Audiences can expect some old favourites from the Gillan-era but he will also perform some of his newer material.

Earlier this year Bernie released triple disc album Dublin Cowboy, a follow-up to Flowers & Dirt from 2014 and Blackheart from 2015 which were all made thanks to pledge funding campaigns.

Tickets cost from £7.70 and are available from ticketsource.co.uk/date/391856.

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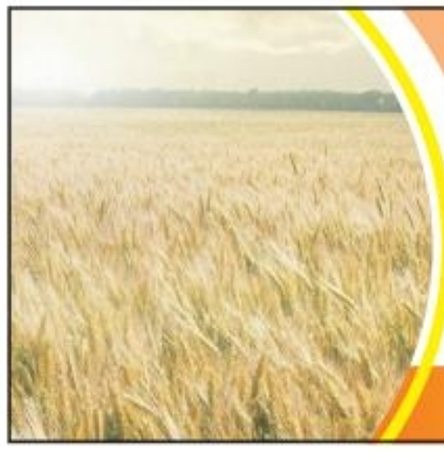

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Will this be the Greatest Day?

By Samantha McGregor

SUPERSTAR singer-songwriter Gary Barlow is the first act to be announced for Nocturne Live next summer.

The concert series returns to Oxfordshire's Blenheim Palace from June 14 to 17 and the Take That supremo will close the event on Sunday, with a performance featuring music from his varied back catalogue including a selection of Take That's greatest hits and tunes from his chart-topping solo albums.

A member of Take That and successful solo performer, Barlow has written 14 number one singles and 24 top 10 hits, selling more than 50 million records and is a six-time recipient of an Ivor Novello Award.

Gary said: "I had such a lot of fun back in 2013 when I played those smaller venues because you're so much closer to the fans. The audience always seem to love the intimacy of it all too.

"I'm also really looking forward to playing in a couple of cities I've never played before as well as getting a chance to meet the fans there."

Nocturne Director Ciro Romano: "We're extremely happy to have secured Gary Barlow for next year's Nocturne Live.

"He's one of the most successful UK songwriters of all time with an incredible back catalogue of music to draw from and his concert will provide a fitting finale to next year's event."

Gary Barlow has also co-written and produced music for other renowned artists including Dame Shirley Bassey, Sir Elton John and Robbie Williams.

His last solo record Since I Saw You Last sold more than 600,000 copies and was the ninth biggest selling album that year.

In more recent years, Barlow has also turned his attention to the world of theatre, writing music and lyrics for musicals Finding Neverland, The Girls and The Band, a musical featuring the music of Take That.

Barlow last toured as a solo artist in 2014, playing The O2 London, Birmingham LG Arena, Glasgow The SSE Hydro and Manchester Arena.

The Nocturne Live concert series was launched in 2015 and has previously featured performances from Elton John, Gregory Porter, Jamie Cullum, Corinne Bailey Rae, The Jacksons, Van Morrison and Jack Savoretti.

Tickets are on sale now, for more information go to nocturnelive.com

On stage: Review, Samantha McGregor

Lucy Penrose as Princess Rose. Picture: *Josh Tomalin*

IF you get the chance Chipping Norton Theatre's Christmas pantomime is a must see.

This year's show is Sleeping Beauty and as usual the theatre has put its own spin on the traditional fairytale.

It starts more than 400 years ago; Princess Rose is cursed by the evil Belladonna and will die after she pricks her finger on a spinning wheel.

Thank fully Fairy Flax is around to help ward off the evil and changes the spell so Rose will only sleep for 100 years.

Sound familiar – that's as near to the original story as we get, Fairy Flax gets the spell wrong and instead of waking up 100 years later, it's 400 and the world has changed, in fact, it's in the middle of the swinging sixties.

Expect all the usual pantomime fun and frolics, lots of audience participation, boos, slapstick and even a custard pie machine.

Watch out for the scene with Belladonna in a bulldozer and the hilarious scenes of the cast climbing the tower block.

Special mention must go to the children in the cast who were amazing, and a big well done to Eamonn Fleming in his first year as Dame.

We loved the show and loved Chipping Norton Theatre, it's small enough to really get up close to the action and we had a fantastic view of everything happening on the stage.

Tickets start at £11 and are available by calling the box office on 01608 642 350 or go to chippingnorton theatre.com

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Out & About

Feast on these entertaining folk

By Samantha McGregor

Tuck into Belshazzer's Feast at the Nettlebed Folk Group

Picture: *Elly Lucas*

ENTERTAINING folk duo Belshazzar's Feast are taking their Christmas show on the road.

Belshazzar's Feast, made up of Hoover The Dog and Pagoda Project's Paul Hutchinson and Paul Sartin, of Bellowhead and Faustus, bring their Christmas tour of seasonal songs and tunes to Nettlebed.

Their show is described as starting with traditional English music, adding a touch of classical and jazz, throwing in a bit of pop and music hall, and topped off with wry humour for a unique live experience.

After 20 plus years together the pair bring a wealth of talent to the stage.

Ahead of the gig on December 18, Paul Sartin told us: "Christmas wouldn't be the same without a trip to the Nettlebed Folk Club; it has been a regular fixture on our Christmas tour since 2010.

"Apart from the year the snow caused chaos, we have always played to a full house of enthusiastic revellers (drunkards).

"The White Hart, conveniently situated next to the Village Hall at Nettlebed, is the venue for the Belshazzar's Christmas Staff Party which makes a change from our usual gastronomic haunts (Little Chefs and Motorway service stations).

"Our first appearance at the folk club was rather inauspicious.

"Few will remember our support slot for the legendary folk giants - all over 7' tall - Brass Monkey. So stunning was our performance that it took us 15 years to get invited again.

"We always look forward to returning."

Paul Sartin is a former member of the award-winning band Bellowhead, and is currently in trio Faustus.

He is also consultant and director of the Andover Museum Loft Singers and wrote Community Choirs Collection, and is musical director of The Transports.

While Paul Hutchinson is a former member of the Celtic jazzers and Hoover the Dog, and is working with jazz clarinetist Karen Wimhurst on the Pagoda Project.

The pair appear at Nettlebed Folk Club, near Henley, on December 18, from 8pm. Tickets cost £14 and are available by calling 01628 636620 or go to nettlebedfolkclub.co.uk

On stage

Concert with a cause

Tickets are on sale now for a sparkling concert featuring Oxford University a cappella group Out of the Blue, classical performers, Matthew Trusler and Ashley Wass, and USA singer song-writer JR Richards.

It takes place at the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, tomorrow, in aid of local children's and young adults' hospice Helen & Douglas House.

Other acts include City of Oxford Silver Band and the hospice's own choir.

For more information and tickets view hdh.org.uk or call 01865 799150.

Christmas Nutcracker

The professional cast for the Cornerstone Arts Centre's Christmas show, The Nutcracker and the Mouse King, are deep in rehearsals ahead of opening night on December 8.

The show runs until December 30.

Go to cornerstone-arts.org

Live ballet

A Nutcracker of a different variety comes to Cineworld in Didcot and Vue cinema in Oxford on Tuesday via a live screening.

The Royal Ballet present the classic Christmas ballet shown live from the Royal Opera House.

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"I honestly believe that Colourfence is the best general purpose fencing product on the market today!"

Get ready for Autumn

Now's the perfect time to replace your garden fence once and for all. Anna Ryder Richardson - Designer and Television Presenter - takes a closer look at Colourfence, the revolutionary low-maintenance system.

It's been ten years since I regularly graced TV screens helping transform people's living spaces with MDF and stripped floorboards. Recently it's been more "celebrity muck out" than "celebrity make-over" as I took up the challenge of owning my own Wildlife Zoo in Tenby. In this time I've learnt quiet a lot about fences and having researched the various options for my own benefit I thought I would share my knowledge with a wider audience.

The latest design processes mean there is now a tremendous array of fencing products for you to choose from, constructed from a variety of materials. Each has its own attributes, and ultimately it can often come down to a matter of personal preference. For me, there was one unique system that stood out as providing the best balance between price and functionality which eradicates fencing problems for good. Or for at least 25 years. Colourfence. For quality, value, longevity, aesthetic design, this fencing system ticks all the boxes. Fencing made for the 21st century that will transform the look of your garden which is supplied and fitted by a company whose customer service is as good as the product.

In my view, Colourfence is the 'Rolls Royce' of fencing – just without the exclusive price tag. What's more, it's guaranteed to stay in place in up to 130mph winds and is virtually maintenance free.

To find out how the experts from Colourfence might help you, I suggest you call **01865 582 171** and speak to their team.

Colourfence: The ultimate garden fence?

For many Colourfence is perhaps the ultimate choice. For the last 15 years it's been widely used across the UK and has steadily gained a reputation for its quality. By using the highest specification Colorbond steel in the fence structure itself, complemented by the highest level of customer service from accredited Franchisees, Colourfence is now regarded by many as the premier fencing solution in the market. Immune to the rot and resistant to the weather that so quickly effects wooden fences, Colourfence has none of the drawbacks of wood - plenty of additional benefits and what's more it's better value!

Call **01865 582 171** for more information

Gardeners' Questions

Q Wooden fence panels just don't seem to last - is there a storm resistant alternative?

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THIS WEEK'S JOB

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Out&About Competition

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Closing date: Friday, January 5, 2018

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We have teamed up with Cirque du Soleil to offer our readers the chance to win a pair of tickets to see this highly sought after production at the Royal Albert Hall on Tuesday 27th February 2018 at 7.30pm.

There are 3x pairs of tickets to be won. To be in with a chance of winning answer the following question:

Q: Which animal kingdom does OVO explore? Reptiles, Mammals, Insects or Fish?

Prize tickets are Price Level 2-3 and are valid for Tuesday 27th February 2018 7.30pm performance only, strictly subject to availability. All prize tickets will be supplied as e-tickets and are non-transferable. No cash alternative is available. Travel is not included.

To enter this competition and more like it, go online to
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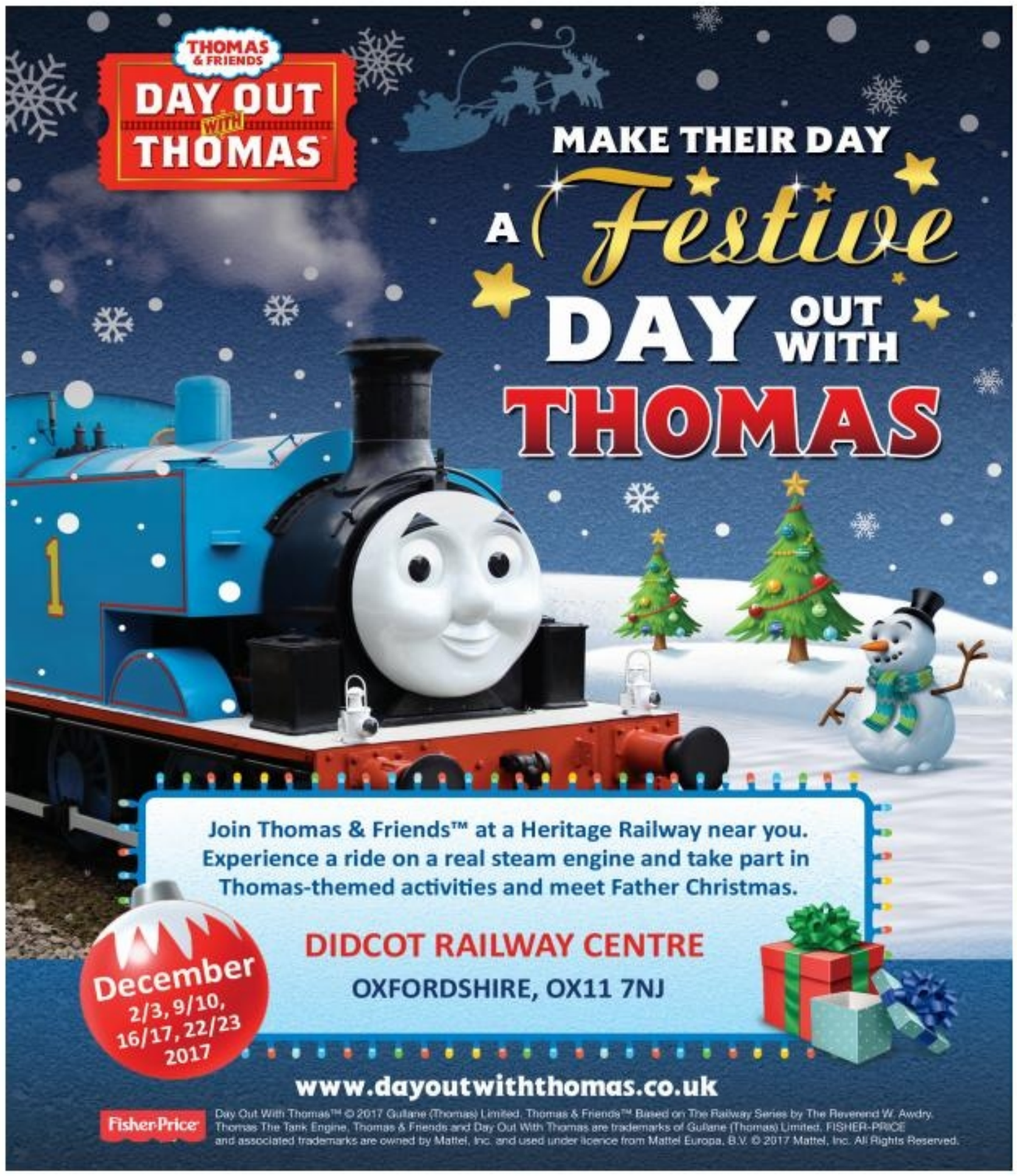
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Who Cares?

Advertising Feature

The mysteries of the brain: food for thought!

If you ask a group of people what makes humans different from animals and why we developed into the species we are today, you'll get a vast array of responses. These will range from the biological – that we stand on our hind legs enabling our hands to do other things than walk and we have opposable thumbs so we can use these hands with particular precision – to the cultural: we have tamed fire, we use tools and language, we feel empathy and we celebrate Christmas. And underlying all of these is the human brain, and its incredible capacity to learn, remember, adapt and believe.

The brain is a marvel of evolution and deciphering how it works is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. How does it change over the course of your life, and respond to your genes, experiences and the passing years to make you the person you are?

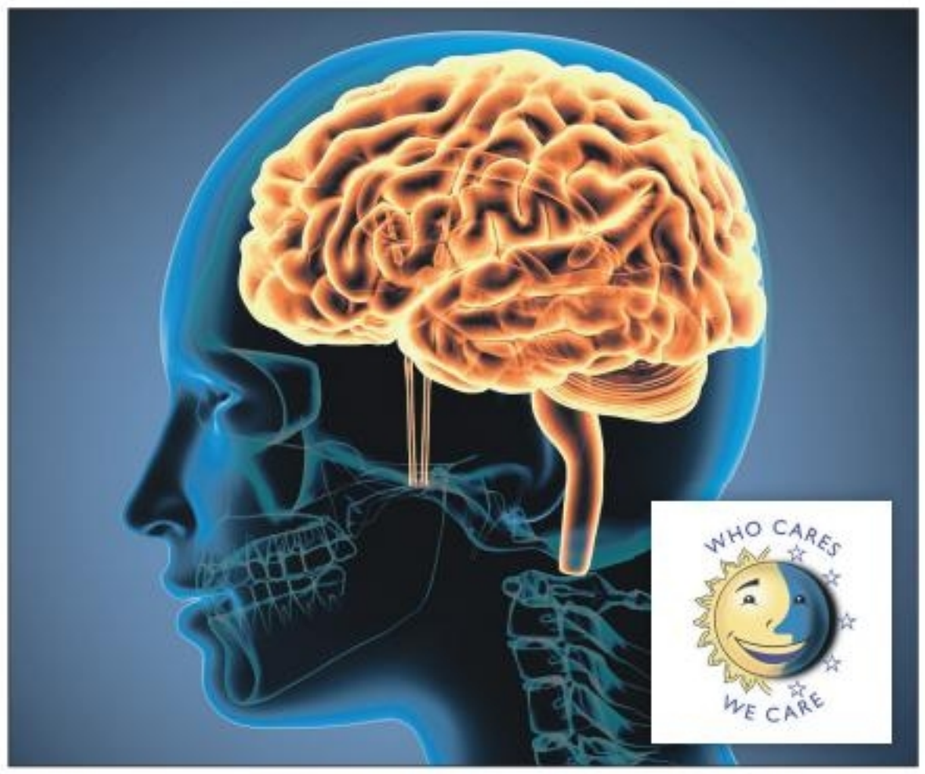
And in Oxford's Museum of Natural History which is free to visit, this month it's your last chance to see 'The Brain Diaries' (until 31st December; for age twelve and over) in which Oxford University neuroscientists share their thoughts about the mysteries of the brain looking at its development chapter-by-chapter from before birth until old age – and offering insights into what this could mean for treating nervous system and mental health disorders.

In this exhibition, you can compare the human brain with the brain of a cat, kangaroo, porpoise and other animals along the 'brain wall'. Follow too the changes that take place in the brain throughout life: see how the mind-boggling billions of neurons and trillions of connections in your brain make toddlers learn so fast, make teenagers emotional risk-takers, and allow others to settle into middle age with relief!

It's long been know that over time our ability to think quickly, to recall stored memories, and to respond to stimuli slows down and this is because of a gradually shrinking cortex, the brain's outermost layer. From age 40, your brain shrinks by five percent a decade on average but there's still plenty of energy and learning potential which is best kept from decline through physical exercise and new experiences. From age 60, the gaps between the folds in the brain's surface become increasingly larger as the brain shrinks in volume, particularly in the frontal cortex – and you can actually see this in the 3D-printed models of the brain of one of the scientists and her family members at different stages of life!

In the Scientific American magazine earlier this year, however, recent research showed that some older adults have a shrink-resistant cortex, and they perform more like youngsters in memory tests. Because these people are more resistant to age-related diseases like Alzheimer's and dementia, they should begin to give researchers some clues about the genes that keep the brain functioning better for longer, a first step developing a successful treatment of these conditions. And although the answers are likely to be a long time coming because brain health also requires a healthy way of life, keep doing the crossword and eating healthily!

And here's food for thought – when you feel happy it's down to certain chemicals in the brain and surprisingly scientists have shown that a win



or an achievement may not result in the happiness you expect because the neurons – or signalling cells – actually react most to the anticipation. So however old we are, however reduced our horizons by physical or mental capacity, we can all still feel happiness by looking ahead to a visit from family or friends, a Christmas Dinner or just by anticipating the snowdrops and daffodils which will be just round the corner once all the Christmas and New Year festivities are over.

Esther Lafferty, Day and Nightcare Assistance

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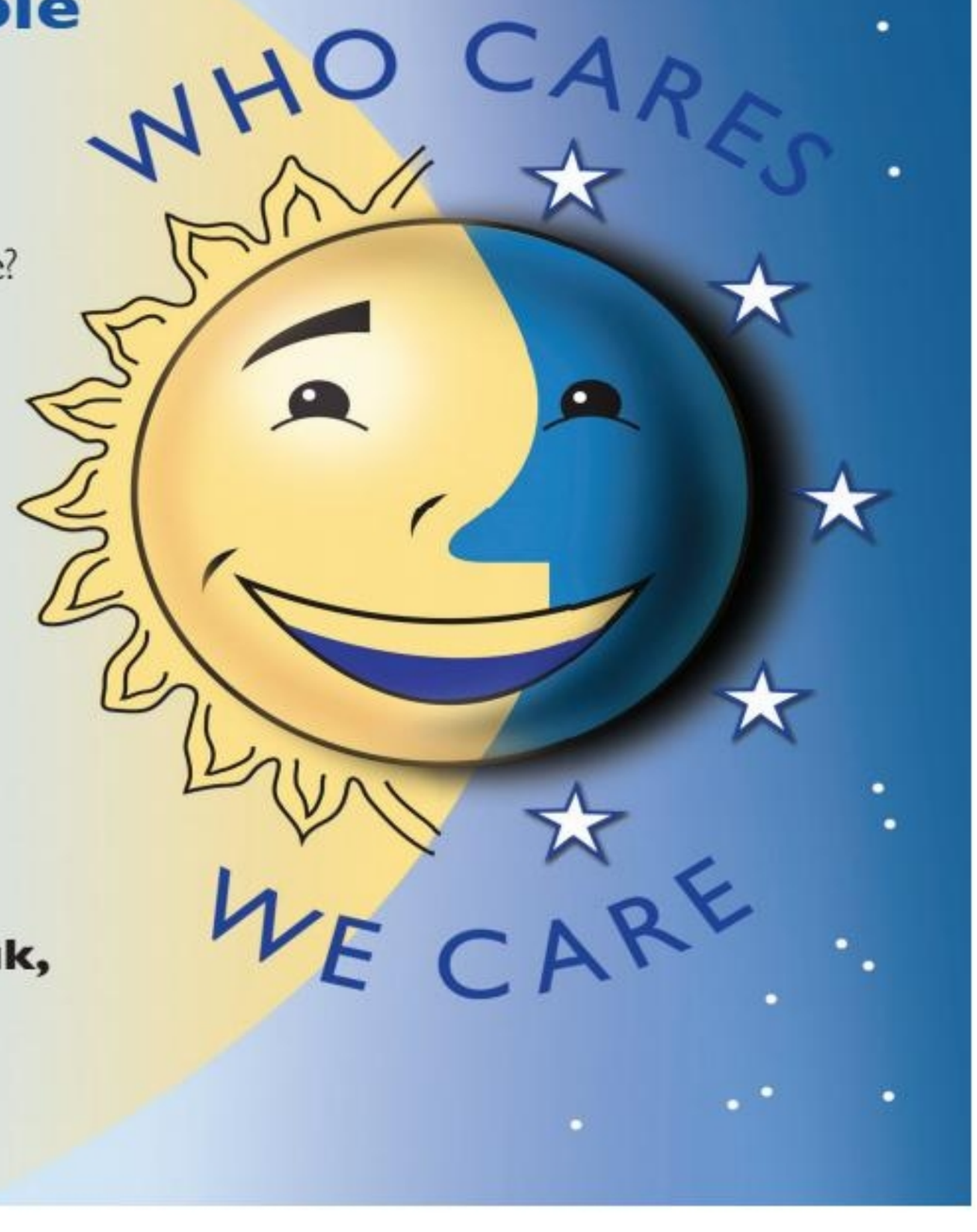


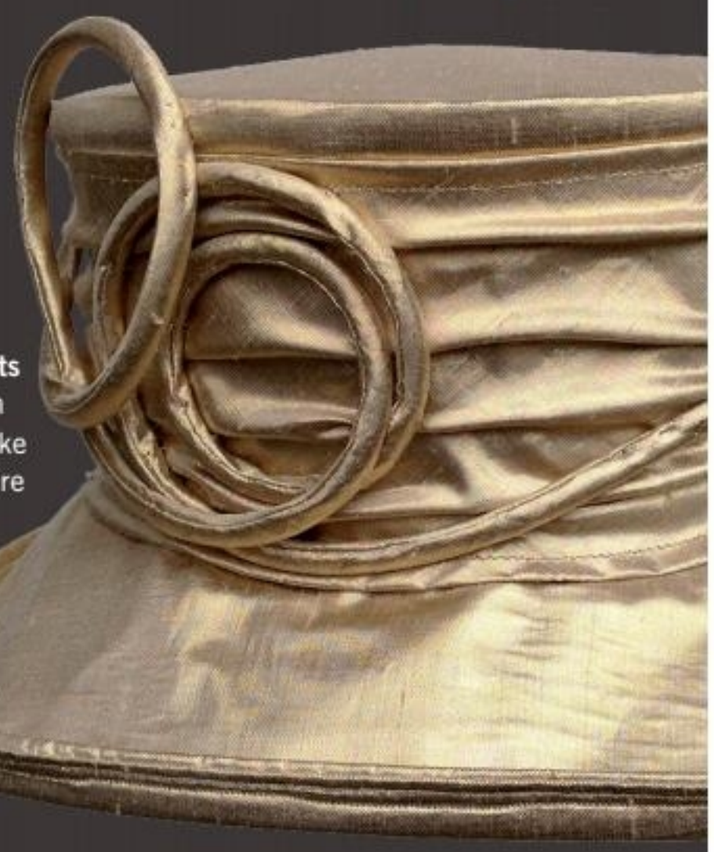
THE REAL WOOD FURNITURE COMPANY

presents

'Colour at Christmas'

Sat Dec 2nd – Sat Dec 23rd

Garry Jones
Ceramics to make you smile



Salt Cellar Hats
'kooky' hats in velvet, silk, fake fur etc by Claire Francis

Michael Harris
Precious Metal: a photographic study of vintage lead cast toys

+ a special sale of accessories and artworks
(perfect presents)...

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11am–5pm and/or by appointment
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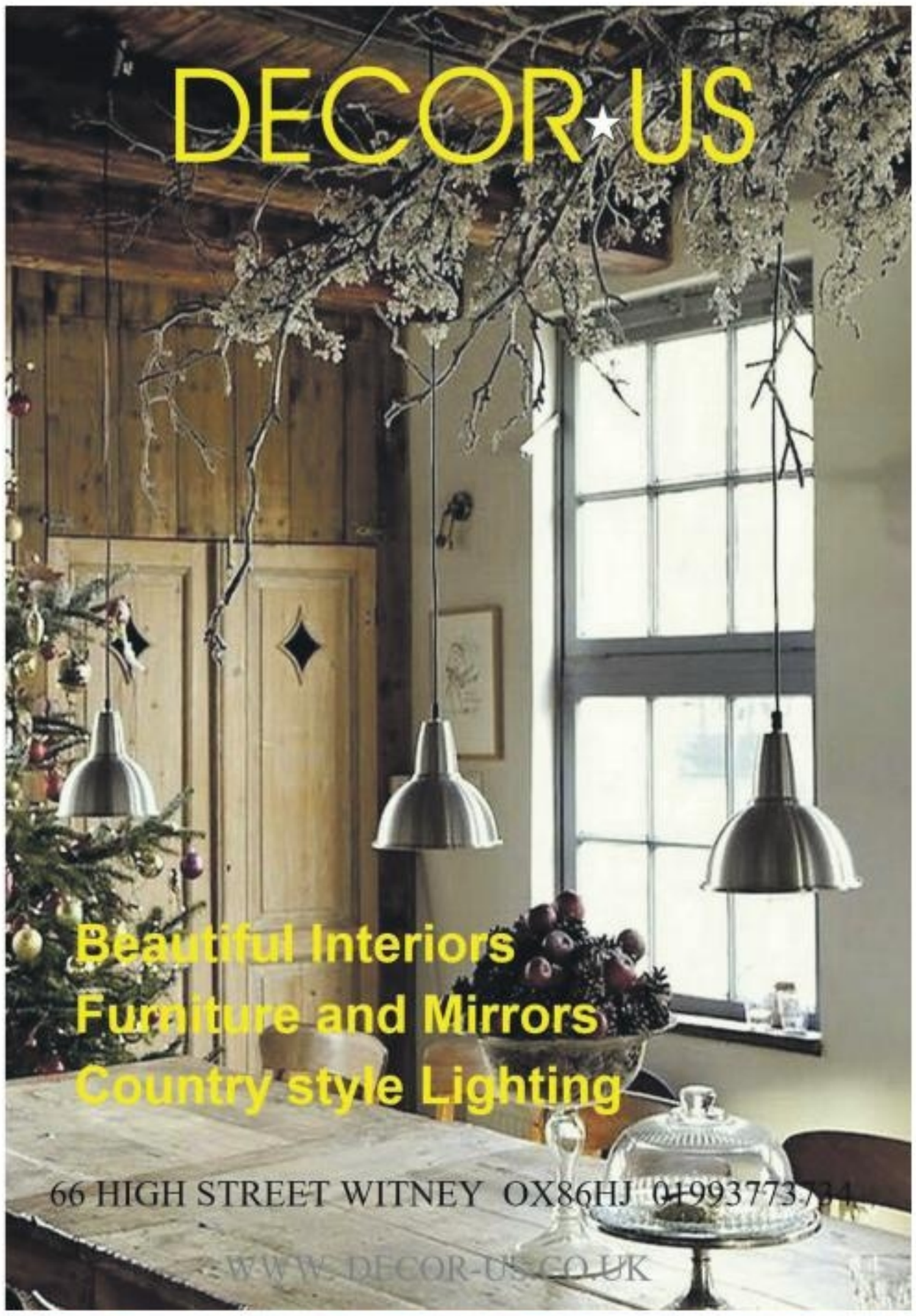

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Advertorial

Oxford Christmas Market to take place from 7th to 17th December

[Oxford, 5 October 2017] - Oxford Christmas Market will once again take centre stage on the historic Broad Street this year - a stone's throw from the Bodleian Library, Ashmolean Museum and Radcliffe Camera.

The market, which takes place from 7th to the 7th December, will consist of around 60 festive stalls – all under the stunning backdrop of the dreaming spires of Oxford.

There will be stall holders selling natural, handmade decorations and gifts and warming food and drink will include German Bratwurst, Churros with hot chocolate sauce, and traditional Glühwein.

Exhibitors include Oxford's much loved ethical and fair trade shop, Indigo, the award winning liquid deli from Scotland, Demijohn, stylish and original artwork of Oxford by Pitch 26, vintage inspired homeware, gifts and accessories from Laurie & Jules, Burrow and Hide, The Upton Cheyney Chilli Company, The Fairy Light Company and Oxford Aromatics.

Whether you are looking to consume festive drinks and food whilst shopping and enjoying the range of carols and bands playing, or you're looking for stocking fillers for the foodies in your life, there will be something for all taste buds, many with a European influence. If you're looking to feast out whilst taking in the festive atmosphere, Soupa Delicious will be serving delicious warming soups served with bred and German Bratwurst will also return offering mouth-watering German Bratwurst, Currywurst and hog roast.

For dessert there will be the tasty German mallow treats from A Chocolate Kiss, sweet and savoury crêpes and Belgian waffles from Crazy Crêpes and Los Churros Amigos will be serving freshly made churros sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon and served with a pot of quality melted Belgian chocolate sauce.

And of course, it wouldn't be a traditional Christmas market without delicious Glühwein (German mulled wine) and warming mulled apple juice from Winter Warmers. For some extra warmth why not add a shot of Amaretto or Rum.

Local choirs and bands will perform throughout the 11 days and children will be able to ride on the Victorian carousel.

Nicole Rahimi, Owner of Oxford Christmas Market says: "We are really excited about the market once again this year. The location is absolutely perfect, it couldn't feel any more festive. The feedback from last year's market was amazing so hopefully we can improve on that even more this year."

For more information and a full list of stalls contact info@oxfordchristmasmarket.co.uk or visit www.oxfordchristmasmarket.co.uk

OXFORD CHRISTMAS MARKET
7-17 December 2017 * Broad Street, Oxford

OXFORD CHRISTMAS MARKET EST. 2009

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* Christmas Shopping
* Food & Live Music
* Children's Victorian Carousel

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Witney

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Sunday Carvery Lunch with Santa.

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New Year Family Carvery

For further information, talk to our events team quoting OWH

Ducklington Lane, Witney OX28 4EX
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Reader travel

HOTEL & TICKET PACKAGES

DIANA: HER FASHION STORY
AT KENSINGTON PALACE

Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays, March-December 2017

See this exhibition charting the fashion evolution of the late Diana, Princess of Wales, from the frills and pie-crust collars of her early days in the public eye to the elegant, sophisticated signature style of the nineties.

PRICE INCLUDES...

- Overnight stay at the 4 star Grosvenor hotel, London with full English breakfast
- Day 2 morning admission ticket to Kensington Palace and gardens, including entrance to the 'Diana: Her Fashion Story' exhibition

2 days, from £89.95pp

Quote: **LQT845** | Visit: **www.omega-holidays.com/LQT845**

CHRISTMAS AT KEW
& THE GROSVENOR HOTEL

Fridays & Sundays, November & December 2017

Here's a chance to see the botanical gardens at Kew in a completely new light – in the dark! With music and a million lights along an Illuminated Trail, plus shopping stalls, this is a wonderland brought to life!

PRICE INCLUDES...

- Overnight stay at the 4 star Grosvenor Hotel with full English breakfast
- Timed admission ticket to the Kew Gardens Illuminated Trail

2 days, from £89.95pp

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Saturday December 2nd

BBC 1

1.15pm Snooker

TOP TV

MORNING

10.00am Saturday Kitchen Live
11.30am Nigella: At My Table

AFTERNOON

12.00pm Football Focus
1.00pm BBC News
1.15pm Snooker
2.00pm Rugby Union
4.30pm Final Score
5.25pm Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme
5.55pm BBC News

EVENING

6.05pm Regional News and Weather
6.15pm Pointless
7.05pm Strictly Come Dancing
8.10pm Michael Mcintyre's Big Show
9.10pm Casualty
10.00pm BBC News
10.20pm Match of the Day
11.50pm The NFL Show
12.20am Lay the Favourite
1.50am Weather for the Week Ahead
1.55am BBC News
6.00am Breakfast

BBC 2

8.30am Rugby League World Cup Final 2017

MORNING

7.30am Deadly 60
8.00am Show Me What You're Made of: UK
8.30am Rugby League World Cup Final 2017
11.30am Homes Under the Hammer

AFTERNOON

12.00pm Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well
12.30pm Operation Snow Tiger
1.30pm Mastermind
2.00pm Snooker
6.00pm Rugby League World Cup Final 2017 Highlights

EVENING

7.00pm Front Row
7.30pm Natural World
8.30pm Dad's Army
9.00pm Imagine...
10.00pm QI XL
10.45pm Insert Name Here
11.15pm Snooker
12.05am Snooker
2.05am Ratcatcher
3.35am This is BBC Two
6.05am Coast

ITV

7.05pm The X Factor

MORNING

9.25am ITV News
9.30am Saturday Morning with James Martin
11.25am Gino's Italian Coastal Escape
11.55am ITV News

AFTERNOON

12.00pm The X Factor
1.30pm ITV Racing: Live from Newbury
4.00pm Thunderbirds are Go
4.25pm The Cruise
5.00pm Paul O'Grady: For The Love of Dogs
5.25pm You've Been Framed!
5.55pm ITV News London
6.00pm ITV News

EVENING

6.10pm Ninja Warrior UK
7.05pm The X Factor
9.10pm I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here!
10.15pm ITV News
10.35pm Rambo III
12.25am Jackpot247
3.00am The Hungry Sailors
3.50am ITV Nightscreen
6.00am Sooty
6.10am Bottom Knocker Street
6.20am Bottom Knocker Street
6.35am Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures
6.45am Super 4

Channel 4

5.35pm Grand Designs

MORNING

7.10am Everybody Loves Raymond
8.05am Frasier
9.05am The Big Bang Theory
10.55am The Simpsons
11.55am Come Dine with Me

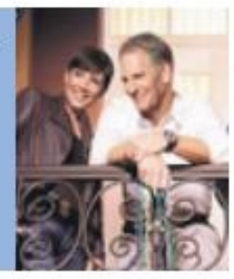
AFTERNOON

2.35pm A Place in the Sun
4.35pm Best Laid Plans
5.35pm Grand Designs

EVENING

6.30pm Channel 4 News
7.00pm Can We Live with Robots?
8.00pm The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
10.25pm I, Robot
12.40am Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA
1.30am The Last Leg
2.25am Hollyoaks Omnibus
4.30am Location, Location, Location
5.25am Draw it!
5.55am Kevin Can Wait

Channel 5



8.05pm NCIS: New Orleans

MORNING

7.00am Milkshake!
9.00am FIA Formula E: Hong Kong
10.45am The Gadget Show
11.45am Cruising with Jane McDonald

AFTERNOON

12.10pm A Christmas to Remember
1.50pm Merry Kissmas
3.35pm Annie Claus is Coming to Town
4.35pm 5 News
4.40pm Annie Claus is Coming to Town
5.25pm A Dream of Christmas

EVENING

6.25pm 5 News
6.30pm A Dream of Christmas
7.10pm Can't Pay? We'll Take it Away!
8.05pm NCIS: New Orleans
8.55pm 5 News Weekend
9.00pm Football on 5
10.00pm Live Championship Boxing.
12.00am Super Casino
3.10am When Calls the Heart
4.40am Access
4.55am House Doctor
5.20am Wildlife SOS
5.45am Chinese Food in Minutes
6.00am Little Princess

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Sunday December 3rd

BBC 1

TOP TV

12.30pm Flog It!

MORNING

7.25am Match of the Day
9.00am The Andrew Marr Show
10.00am Fern Britton Meets...
11.00am Sunday Politics

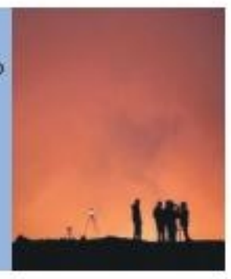
AFTERNOON

12.15pm BBC News
12.30pm Flog It!
12.50pm Mary Berry's Country House Secrets
1.50pm FA Cup Final Score
4.15pm Songs of Praise
4.55pm Blue Planet II
5.55pm BBC News

EVENING

6.10pm Regional News and Weather
6.20pm Countryfile
7.20pm Strictly Come Dancing
8.00pm Blue Planet II
9.00pm Howards End
10.00pm BBC News
10.20pm Regional News and Weather
10.30pm Match of the Day 2
11.30pm Ronny Chieng: International Student
11.55pm Weather for the Week Ahead
12.00am BBC News
6.00am Breakfast

BBC 2



TOP TV

9.00pm Expedition Volcano

MORNING

7.35am Monty Don's Secret History of the British Garden
8.35am Countryfile
9.30am Saturday Kitchen Best Bites
11.00am Food and Drink
11.30am My Life on a Plate

AFTERNOON

12.15pm MOTD2 Extra
1.00pm Snooker
6.00pm Match of the Day

EVENING

7.00pm Turkey with Simon Reeve
8.00pm Robot Wars
9.00pm Expedition Volcano
10.00pm Snowfall
10.45pm Snowfall
11.40pm Snooker
12.30am Snooker
2.30am Question Time
3.30am Holby City
4.30am This is BBC Two
6.00am An Island Parish: Falklands
6.30am Claimed and Shamed

ITV

TOP TV

12.00pm Tipping Point

MORNING

9.30am Australian Wilderness with Ray Mears
10.00am Peston on Sunday
10.55am The Martin Lewis Money Show
11.25am Save Money: Good Food

AFTERNOON

12.00pm Tipping Point
1.00pm ITV News
1.05pm The X Factor
3.10pm Midsomer Murders
5.05pm How to Spend it Well at Christmas with Phillip Schofield

EVENING

6.05pm ITV News London
6.15pm ITV News
6.30pm The Chase: Celebrity Special
7.25pm The X Factor
9.00pm I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here!
10.30pm ITV News
10.45pm Peston on Sunday
11.45pm Car Crash Britain Caught on Camera
12.35am Jackpot247
3.00am Motorsport UK
3.50am ITV Nightscreen
5.05am The Jeremy Kyle Show

Channel 4

TOP TV

1.00pm F1: Grand Prix

MORNING

7.10am Everybody Loves Raymond
8.30am Frasier
9.30am Sunday Brunch

AFTERNOON

12.30pm Paul Hollywood
1.00pm F1: Grand Prix
2.00pm The Simpsons
3.55pm Arthur Christmas
5.50pm Shrek

EVENING

7.30pm Channel 4 News
8.00pm Coastal Railways with Julie Walters
9.00pm Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol
11.35pm I, Frankenstein
1.15am Morning Glory
3.00am Trump: An American Dream
3.55am Gillette World Sport
4.25am KOTV Boxing Weekly
4.50am Mobil 1 The Grid
5.20am Kirstie's Handmade Treasures
5.35am Countdown
6.20am 3rd Rock from the Sun

Channel 5

TOP TV

8.15pm Aviva Premiership Rugby Highlights

MORNING

7.00am Milkshake!
8.55am FIA Formula E: Hong Kong
10.40am Football on 5
11.25am Finding Father Christmas

AFTERNOON

1.10pm The Christmas Secret
2.55pm On the Twelfth Day of Christmas
3.55pm 5 News
4.00pm On the Twelfth Day of Christmas
4.45pm Northpole 2: Open for Christmas
5.45pm 5 News
5.50pm Northpole 2: Open for Christmas

EVENING

6.30pm Call Me Claus
8.15pm Aviva Premiership Rugby Highlights
8.55pm 5 News Weekend
9.00pm The Paul O'grady Story
10.30pm When Reality TV Goes Horribly Wrong
1.30am Lip Sync Battle UK
1.55am Super Casino
3.10am Bargain Loving Brits in Blackpool
4.00am My Mum's Hotter Than Me!
4.50am House Doctor
5.15am Wildlife SOS
5.45am Chinese Food in Minutes

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Images based on artistic impression.

PetLife.org.uk
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Welcome to The Lamb Inn

The Lamb Inn is a small inn based in the picturesque Cotswolds, offering 5 unique and stylish ensuite guest rooms, and with an idyllic landscaped terrace.
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Dining at The Lamb Inn

Enjoy the comfort of our delightful Cotswold restaurant with an open log fire. We have worked hard to source fresh quality local and British produce in order to produce seasonal menus, which are truly British, all freshly cooked on the premises by our Head Chef Tim Jones.
After your meal enjoy a relaxing drink in our Cotswold Pub.

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Our Cotswold accommodation offers five stylish ensuite guest rooms, which have an individual style by interior designer Jean Harrod. They feature high quality fitting and furnishings, and individual marble bathrooms with power showers, to make your feel pampered and cosseted.
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All our rooms are non-smoking and offer free Wi-Fi, television and beverage tray. Our rooms offer the perfect place to turn in after enjoying a gratifying meal in our Restaurant.

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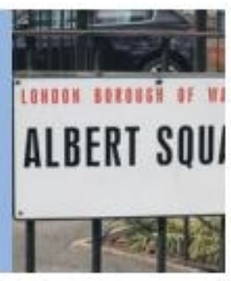
01865 305305
www.oxfordplayhouse.com

Monday December 4th

BBC 1

TOP TV

8.00pm EastEnders



MORNING

9.15am Island Medics
10.00am Homes Under the Hammer
11.00am Claimed and Shamed
11.45am The Sheriffs are Coming

AFTERNOON

12.15pm Bargain Hunt
1.00pm BBC News at One
1.30pm Regional News and Weather
1.45pm Doctors
2.15pm Armchair Detectives
3.00pm Escape to the Country
3.45pm The Hairy Bikers Home for Christmas
4.30pm Money for Nothing
5.15pm Pointless
6.00pm BBC News at Six

EVENING

6.30pm Regional News and Weather
7.00pm The One Show
7.30pm Panorama
8.00pm EastEnders
8.30pm Would I Lie to You?
9.00pm The Real Marigold on Tour
10.00pm BBC News at Ten
10.30pm Regional News and Weather
10.45pm Have I Got a Bit More News for You
11.30pm Michael Mcintyre's Big Show
12.30am The Graham Norton Show
1.20am Weather for the Week Ahead
1.25am BBC News

BBC 2

TOP TV

6.00pm Celebrity Eggheads

MORNING

7.15am Royal Recipes
8.00am Mary Berry's Country House Secrets
9.00am Victoria Derbyshire
11.00am BBC Newsroom Live

AFTERNOON

12.00pm The Daily Politics
1.00pm Snooker
5.15pm Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is
6.00pm Celebrity Eggheads

EVENING

6.30pm Strictly - It Takes Two
7.00pm Match of the Day
7.30pm Wild Cameramen at Work
8.00pm University Challenge
8.30pm Nigella: At My Table
9.00pm Employable Me
10.00pm Insert Name Here
10.30pm Newsnight
11.15pm Snooker
12.05am Snooker
2.05am Countryfile
3.00am Blue Planet II
4.00am This is BBC Two
6.00am An Island Parish: Falklands

ITV

TOP TV

8.30pm Coronation Street

MORNING

9.25am The Jeremy Kyle Show
10.30am This Morning

AFTERNOON

12.30pm Loose Women
1.30pm ITV Lunchtime News
1.55pm ITV News London
2.00pm Judge Rinder
3.00pm Dickinson's Real Deal
4.00pm Tipping Point
5.00pm The Chase
6.00pm ITV News London

EVENING

6.30pm ITV Evening News
7.00pm Emmerdale
7.30pm Coronation Street
8.00pm The Martin Lewis Money Show
8.30pm Coronation Street
9.00pm I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here!
10.30pm ITV News
11.00pm ITV News London
11.15pm Killer Women with Piers Morgan
12.15am Life Inside Jail: Hell on Earth
1.05am Jackpot247
3.00am The Jeremy Kyle Show
3.55am ITV Nightscreen

Channel 4

TOP TV

5.00pm Four in a Bed

MORNING

7.35am Everybody Loves Raymond
9.00am Frasier
10.05am Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA
11.00am Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast

AFTERNOON

12.00pm Channel 4 News
12.05pm Kirstie's Handmade Christmas
12.25pm A Christmas Proposal
2.10pm Countdown
3.00pm Lost and Found Ep6
4.00pm A Place in the Sun
5.00pm Four in a Bed
5.30pm Come Dine with Me
6.00pm The Simpsons

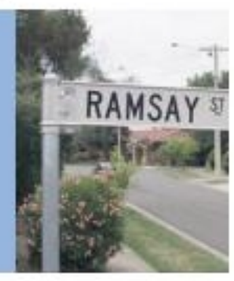
EVENING

6.30pm Hollyoaks
7.00pm Channel 4 News
8.00pm Paul Hollywood
8.30pm Supershoppers
9.00pm 999: What's Your Emergency?
10.00pm First Dates
11.05pm Don't Tell the Bride
12.05am Life Stripped Bare
1.20am One Born Every Minute
2.15am The Secret Life of 5 Year Olds
3.10am Like Father Like Son
5.10am Draw it!
5.35am Countdown
6.20am 3rd Rock from the Sun

Channel 5

TOP TV

6.00pm Neighbours



MORNING

7.00am Milkshake!
9.05am Mofy
9.15am The Wright Stuff
11.35am GPs: Behind Closed Doors

AFTERNOON

12.25pm The Gadget Show
1.25pm 5 News Lunchtime
1.30pm Neighbours
2.00pm Christmas Cookies
3.45pm The Christmas Calendar
5.30pm 5 News at 5
6.00pm Neighbours

EVENING

6.30pm 5 News Tonight
7.00pm Weather Terror
8.00pm Sinkholes
9.00pm Concorde
10.00pm JFK's Secret Killer: The Evidence
11.05pm JFK Jr: The Crash That Killed a Kennedy
12.05am Mayday
1.00am Super Casino
3.10am Greatest British Bridges: The Severn
4.00am Now That's Funny!
4.45am House Doctor
5.10am Divine Designs

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Subaru BRZ 2.0i SE Lux Auto

Give Subaru a try before you judge it

By **Tony Yates**

IF you talk to anyone about buying a Subaru – they will automatically think you are a 'yobbo' and cast you aside thinking the only possible reason you had for buying one in the first place - was because you wanted to annoy every other road user.

And I have to admit - in a way, they do have a point, as there is a young chap who lives just round the corner from me who annoys me very much – because, he thinks owning a Subaru WRX STi means he needs to have a stereo the size of 'the planet Earth' – and wheels that would not look out of place on a JCB.

Well I would like you to forget all about that now and instead focus on the new 2017 model Subaru BRZ – because actually this could just be the new sports car you have been yearning for.

Subaru drivers have a reputation but this is a nimble little sports car

Power & efficiency

Fitted with a 2.0 litre horizontally-opposed (Boxer), 4-cylinder, 4-stroke (DOHC 16V) petrol engine with 200ps @ 7000rpm and 205Nm of torque. 0-62mph is around 8.2sec, fuel consumption is a decent 39.8 mpg combined and a top speed of around 130mph.

Boxer engines have taken some stick in the past – but, actually they fascinate me - and the Boxer engine in the BRZ is pretty cool, thanks to key features such as the engine's square bore and stroke (86mm x 86mm), which all helps achieve a balance between mechanical efficiency, environmental performance, speed and power.

The engine is also fitted with the D-4S direct and port injection system. This selects the appropriate fuel injection rate to provide greater fuel efficiency and lower emissions - all wonderful stuff then.

On the road

Nimble, frisky and if I am being honest, a little minx – and that's just to get you started. Take the nimble little BRZ out on the road and you will feel how well it grips – again thanks to the BRZ being fitted with a Torsen limited slip rear differential for improved traction, allowing the more enthusiastic driver to make the most of the car's rear-wheel drive layout.

Of course to get the best out of a sports car – you need to have a front-engined, rear-wheel drive layout – and the BRZ has this by the bucket load.

For 2017, the dampers have also been redesigned to reduce body roll, increase precision whilst cornering, which has made a massive impact on ride comfort whilst still being a dynamically focused machine.

Subaru has also lowered the strut mounts to help reduce the centre of gravity which helps give the BRZ a much sleeker and lower profile on the road.

Design & technology

Some of the additional standard equipment on the BRZ includes; Auto on headlights (LED front & LED rear) 6.2" multifunction colour touchscreen, satellite navigation, 17" alloy wheels, heated front seats, dual-zone automatic air-conditioning, cruise control, ABS, brake assist, front, side, curtain and knee airbags.

To sum up

What can I say – the BRZ is a great drive and perfect for someone who wants a nimble little sports car.

Price: £27,995 (SE Lux Auto OTR)

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2012 12 MAZDA CX-5 2.2 D SPORT NAV 5D 173 BHP **£8,250**

2012 12 MAZDA CX-5 2.2 D SPORT NAV 5D 173 BHP, Grey, Diesel, Anit lock, Heated seats, 120k..... **£8,250**

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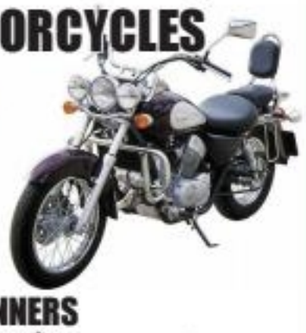

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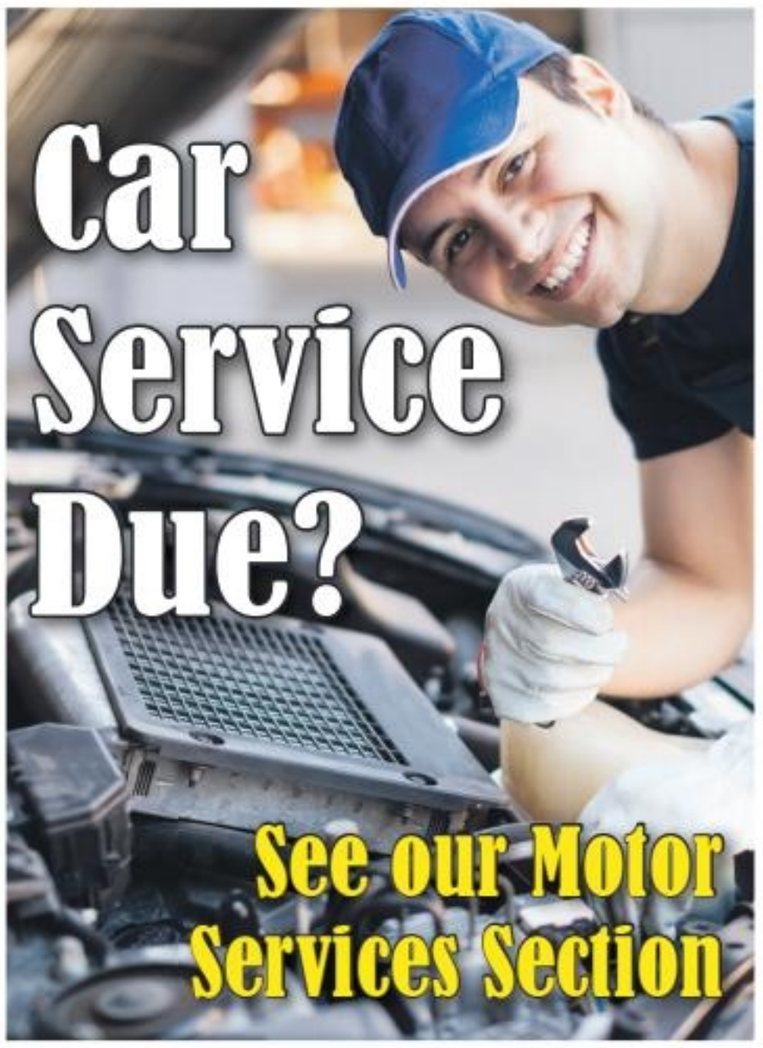

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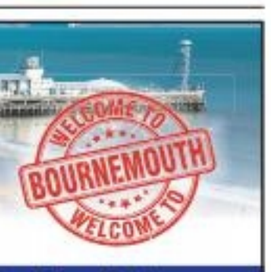

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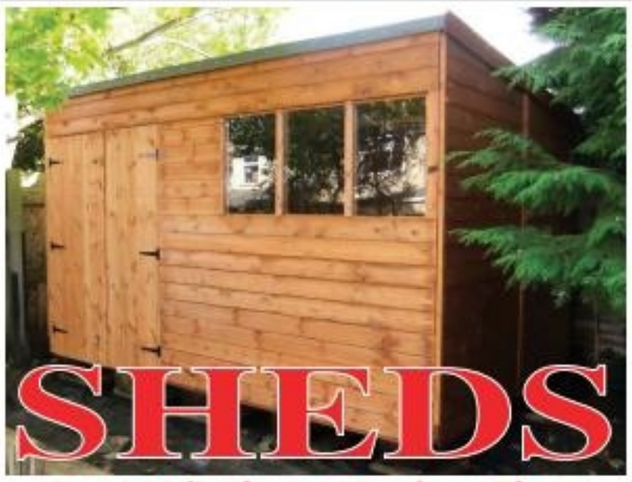

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Hulk's multi-million boost for team as Renault end strongly

By George Welch

F1 - Renault/Haas

NICO Hulkenberg gave Renault a multi-million pound boost for next year by securing sixth place for his team in the Formula 1 standings at Sunday's season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

The Enstone-based team hailed the 'amazing' efforts of Hulkenberg, whose sixth-placed finish and eight point haul were enough to leapfrog Toro Rosso in the constructors' championships.

Renault's late charge up the table is expected to benefit the team to the tune of $8.5million (around £6.4m) in terms of revenue distribution and prize money.

Hulkenberg, who got the job done despite a five second penalty for passing Force India's Sergio Perez off-track on the opening lap, described the race as a "thriller".

He said: "We managed to come out on top and it's a very decent end to the season.

Nico Hulkenberg did what he needed to do in Abu Dhabi **Picture**: *Renault Sport Formula One Team*

"Sixth position in the championship is good for us and will be a morale booster for the team over the winter.

"We had a good package over the second half of the season, but we have had some issues so it is great to finish on a positive result and go into the winter with our chins up."

Renault started the day four points behind Toro Rosso, with Banbury-based Haas sitting a further two points back to set up a three-way fight for the extra prize money.

While the result is worth millions financially, managing director Cyril Abiteboul said it also represented a significant milestone in Renault's bid to return to winning ways in Formula 1 racing.

"Mission accomplished. We came here with one clear objective – and I'm so proud we got it," he said.

"It's a milestone for the team and an achievement that goes beyond the on-track result."

He added: "Nico has been amazing all-year long. He's shown that on so many occasions. It's a great result for the team."

Hulkenberg's team-mate Carlos Sainz had an early end to the season after his wheel came loose when leaving the pit lane on lap 31.

Banbury outfit Haas would have needed 11 points to climb to sixth, but Romain Grosjean and Kevin Magnussen brought their cars home outside the points in 11th and 13th respectively.

Embracing new technology and future of golf

Golf

FRILFORD Heath member Eddie Pepperell flew straight from the European Tour season finale in Dubai to open new state-of-the-art facilities at the south Oxfordshire golf club.

Following a superb campaign, which was rounded off with a tied-48th finish at the Dubai World Championships, the world number 141 returned to his hometown club to open an impressive performance centre and golf shop.

The new high-tech performance centre allows players to try some of the world's leading courses with the help of an innovative golf simulator.

And the shop, boasting latest custom fitting technology, will help golfers reach the top of their game with tailor-made equipment.

Pepperell was joined by England Golf CEO Nick Pink as the pair opened the doors for the first time to welcome members and the public last week.

The Abingdon man said: "We live in a world that is ever changing in terms of new technology and innovation, and golf isn't immune to those changes.

"To remain as one of the UK's leading sports, golf needs to embrace technological advances and bring it into the game. The new state-of-the-art performance centre here at Frilford Heath does just that.

"We need to make golf an attractive proposition to the next generation of players so if we can do that by introducing simulators and custom fitting technology to make the sport more accessible then today's launch can only be a good thing."

Sun sets on Massa's F1 career with final point

Felipe Massa races round a Formula 1 track for the last time **Picture**: *Williams Martini Racing*

F1 - Williams

FELIPE Massa bowed out of Formula 1 with a point scoring finish in his final race at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

It may have only been the one point but the Brazilian was happy enough to finish in the points as Grove-based Williams finished fifth in the constructors' championship.

Massa finished 11th in the drivers' championship, a place and three points above team-mate Lance Stroll. The Canadian rookie had a difficult run out and, despite fighting up to 13th, crossed the line in 18th.

But this race was all about the retiring Massa. The 37-year-old said: "It's a great feeling. I can say I am really proud of everything I've achieved, all 16 years and all the amazing races, and the great people I met in the paddock, racing against the best drivers in the world.

"I'm very lucky to have had all of this in my life so thanks to my family and to God for all of these amazing opportunities."

He added: "The race was good, I was fighting from the beginning to the end. Unfortunately, we lost the position after the pitstop but I'm really happy overall."

Determined to finish the season on a high, chief technical officer Paddy Lowe said: "There was a lot of emotion in the camp around Felipe's last drive for the team after such a great career in Formula 1.

"I'm happy for Felipe and for the team to finish that way."

Join coaching staff at Saints

American Football

AMERICAN football side Oxford Saints are looking for additional staff for the start of the 2018 season.

The Saints, one of the longest running teams in the UK, want to recruit a quarterback coach and a special teams coordinator to join their backroom staff. The club is also welcoming applications for other positions or as general coaching assistants and will use experienced coaches to support training if needed.

New coaches must be BAFCA level 1 certified (or looking to become qualified) and will work closely with head coach Andrew Day to plan and deliver training sessions.

They must also attend as many training sessions (Sunday afternoons) and games (home and away) as possible, as well as being able to contribute to film analysis.

The Saints, who boast some of the best facilities in Britball, were promoted to Division 1 for the 2017 season and competed immediately with a 5-5 record to finish third out of five in the SFC Central conference.

The new season is due to begin in April. Contact the club at www.oxfordsaints.com/contact/ or Facebook at facebook.com/oxfordsaints.

Stars spook Phantoms to gain a double victory

Basketball

TABLE-TOPPING Oxford City Stars were too strong for a Peterborough Phantoms side desperate to get revenge on their hosts for inflicting their first defeat of the season earlier in the month.

Kenny Redmond's side ran out 7-0 winners on Sunday to extend their lead at the league's summit to five points.

After a too-close-to-call and goalless first period, the Stars came out firing on all cylinders in the second period, easily outshooting the Phantoms 16-6 in what proved to be a crucial period in the game.

Joe Edwards and Dominic Hopkins scored two apiece for a comfortable 4-0 lead four minutes before the buzzer.

The third period was more even but Oxford had hit their rhythm and added a further three goals to rack up their ninth win on the spin.

Jake Florey and Alex Staples fired a quick-fire double halfway through the last period before Dax Hedges added the seventh in the final couple of minutes.

Peterborough had won all seven of their games before losing to Oxford 7-3 at the start of November.

This latest defeat means they have lost three of their last four matches, slipping to fourth and losing ground on the Stars in the process.

Oxford travel to seventh-placed Chelmsford Chieftains on Sunday looking to extend their position.

Joe Edwards, centre, and Dominic Hopkins, left, celebrate one of Hopkins' goals. **Picture**: *Paul Foster*

Sport

No luck for teams in FA Trophy

By George Welch

Oxford City

THERE will be no Oxfordshire team flying the flag for the county in the first round proper of the FA Trophy after Oxford City, Banbury United and Thame United all crashed out in the qualifying stages at the weekend.

City were beaten by lower opposition, although there's no real shame in losing to Hereford, a phoenix club charging its way up the league system.

The Hoops were unable to reproduce their recent fine form and were beaten 2-1 at Court Place Farm in the third qualifying round – their first hurdle – on Saturday.

A Freddie Grant header put the National League South strugglers ahead early on but the visitors fought back through goals from former Didcot Town hitman John Mills and Dara O'Shea, who hit the winner just after the hour mark.

Thame United are also out after losing 3-1 at Haringey Borough.

Playing in their first ever game on a 3G pitch, United fell behind to a Jordan Edwards strike.

Dan West levelled for Thame with 15 minutes to go, but they were denied by two late goals from Anthony McDonald (p) and Michael Ademiluyi.

Banbury boss Mike Ford was unhappy with some of his players following a 3-2 extra-time home defeat by Farnborough in the delayed second round replay and hinted some could be on their way out.

Jack Westbrook (AFC Rushden & Diamonds) and Ravi Shamsi (Chesham United) have already departed following another disappointing result.

Languishing in mid-table, the Puritans are also out of the FA Trophy, despite taking an early lead against Farnborough.

Jefferson Louis grabbed the goal on 14 minutes but the scores were level at the break after Josh Huggins' goal on 39 minutes.

The game swung in Boro's favour when Perry Coles, who scored in the first match, netted on the hour.

Freddie Grant gives Oxford City the lead against Hereford
Picture: *Michael Allen*

A Louis penalty restored parity with less than 20 minutes to go to force extra time.

The winner arrived seven minutes into the first half of extra time as Nic Ciardini, who also scored in the first meeting between the sides, nodded the all-important winner.

Buildbase FA Trophy second qualifying round replay
Saturday 25 November
Banbury United 2-3aet Farnborough

Buildbase FA Trophy third qualifying round
Saturday 25 November
Haringey Borough 3-1 **Thame United**
Oxford City 1-2 Hereford

Evo-Stik Premier South
Tuesday 28 November
Banbury United 1-1 Kettering Town

Evo-Stik South East
Tuesday 28 November
Thame United 3-3 Northwood

Evo-Stik South West
Saturday 25 November
Larkhall Athletic 5-0 **North Leigh**
Mangotsfield United 2-5 **Kidlington**
Paulton Rovers 2-2 **Didcot Town**
Tuesday 28 November
North Leigh 1-2 Winchester
Wednesday 29 November
Kidlington v Cirencester Town

Uhlsport Hellenic League Premier Division
Saturday 25 November
Abingdon United 2-2 Highworth Town
Tuesday 28 November
Oxford City Nomads 2-3 Highworth Town

Greens get their five on the day to continue rise

Evo Stik round-up

ANACLET Odhiambo and Duran Martin each scored twice as in-form Kidlington continue to rise up the Evo-Stik South West table.

The Greens beat Mangotsfield United in an impressive 5-2 away win to extend their unbeaten league record to 11 games.

Kiddy battled back from an early set back to produce a good team performance and close the gap on the play-off places.

Ed Weeks nodded the Mangos into a 14th minute lead but Julian McCalmon's side were 3-1 up at the break thanks to Odhiambo's brace and Martin's first of the afternoon.

Ben Brown stretched the lead before Martin made it five with his second.

Cameron Allen scored late on for the hosts, but it was merely a consolation.

Didcot Town battled back from 2-0 down to earn a 2-2 draw at Paulton Rovers.

They were behind after just five minutes when Josh Ford headed home a corner.

And the deficit was doubled 10 minutes later when James Byrne polished off a decisive counter-attack.

The Railwaymen responded immediately when Ford headed George Reid's cross into his own net.

Diddy dominated the rest of the half, having a penalty shout turned down and going close through Seth Humphries and Marlon Agyakwa strikes.

And Town got their equaliser on 74 minutes when the prolific Felipe Barcelos slotted past goalkeeper Alexis Andre.

Any suggestions that North Leigh's season had turned a corner after three straight victories were rubbished with a 5-0 drubbing at the hands of Larkhall Athletic on Saturday.

Felipe Barcelos, pictured earlier in the season, scored Didcot Town's equaliser. Picture: *Roger Neal*

The Millers followed that up with a 2-1 defeat against Winchester City at Eynsham Park on Tuesday for an eighth defeat of the season.

Nomad pipped at the post by last-minute penalty

Hellenic round up

HELLENIC Premier League leaders Highworth Town found the going tough on their travels to Oxfordshire.

The runaway leaders, who have won 17 of their 20 matches, were held to a 2-2 draw against out of form Abingdon United on Saturday and needed a last minute winner to overcome 10-man Oxford City Nomads 3-2 on Tuesday.

Abingdon twice took the lead against the Kent side but were pegged back immediately on both occasions at the Northcourt.

Callum Harvey's goal put United 1-0 up on 31 minutes, only for Ash Edenborough to level the scores a minute later.

And when Tom Butler restored Abingdon's advantage in the second half on 55 minutes, Edenborough prevented a shock defeat with a penalty two minutes later.

The point is still very good for Abingdon however, who, prior to the previous week's win at Windsor, went 11 games without a win, a run that included eight defeats.

The Nomads nearly caused a mini upset but couldn't quite replicate their fellow Oxfordshire side's result.

With the scores 1-1 at half time, Sami Khawaja scored his second of the night to put the development side into the lead.

Liam Talboys was sent off on 72 minutes and, a minute later, Calum Parsons levelled the scores direct from a Highworth free kick.

There was heartbreak for the Nomads right at the death as a last-minute penalty clinched maximum points for the away side.

Abingdon host Royal Wootton Bassett on Saturday before travelling to Highmoor Ibis on Monday.

Wantage Town welcome the Nomads to Alfredian Park in an Oxfordshire derby on Friday.

Six-goal thriller only yields single point for Thame

Thame United

HEAD honchos Lynton Goss and Dan West were on the score sheet again as Thame United had to settle for a point in a six-goal thriller against Northwood on Tuesday.

West celebrated a brace for his 11th and 12th league goals of the season and Goss scored Thame's third of the evening to get him into double figures for Evo-Stik South East goals.

The former's double came in three first half minutes as United responded well to going a goal down on 22 minutes.

West, Goss and Harry Mepham went close for Thame in the second half before the Woods levelled the scores just after the hour.

Goss fired the south Oxfordshire side back into the lead on 69 minutes but Northwood were level again just a minute later. And that's the way it stayed at the ASM Stadium as Thame, who dropped a place to 15th, extended their unbeaten league run to four matches.

They travel to Egham Town, who sit a place above them in the league, on Saturday.

Hard work pays off for one point

Banbury United

A MUCH-CHANGED Banbury United side worked hard to gain a deserved point against Kettering at the Banbury Plant Hire Community Stadium on Tuesday.

The Puritans came from behind to grab the 1-1 draw – their fifth draw in a row – against the Southern Premier high-flyers.

Banbury had much the better of the opening 20 minutes of the game so it was against the run of play when Lindon Meikle fired the ball home from close range on 21 minutes.

United worked hard for the rest of the game but struggled to create any clear chances.

Mike Ford's side kept plugging away in the second half and got their deserved reward on 77 minutes after Darren Pond was fouled in the area by Michael Richens.

Veteran striker Jefferson Louis stepped up to convert the spot-kick.

Ford said the draw was "probably" a fair result, adding: "We started very well and we had some chances and clearances off the line. Then out of nothing they get a goal and it was our own making. Whether it was a goal from open play or from a penalty we got a deserved equaliser.

"The immediate reaction from the opposition bench was to see the game out because they probably sensed we would go on to win it. It was a really good point and performance. I'm really pleased."

Banbury now face two away games at St Ives Town on Saturday and Merthyr Town on Tuesday.

Forced to retire, Ribs offered coaching role

By George Welch

CROOKED Oxford United defender Christian Ribeiro has been offered a coaching role at the club after an injury forced the defender into an early retirement.

A knee problem has forced the right back to hang up his boots aged just 27, the club announced last week.

Ribeiro made 17 appearances in yellow – 14 of which have been this season – after an injury-hit spell at the club having joined on a free from Exeter City in the summer of 2016.

He injured his ankle shortly after joining the club last year but medical advice warned he wouldn't fully recover from his recent knee problem.

The Welshman, intelligent and considered a valued presence in the dressing room, is now weighing up his future as he ponders his next career move.

Speaking of the difficult decision to call time on his career, he said: "It has been really, really tough. It's the hardest decision I have ever had to make. But I have to do what is right in the long term and therefore, sadly, I am going to have to hang up my boots.

"I have always given my all for the team throughout my career but unfortunately over the past couple of months since incurring an issue, I knew that something wasn't right.

"I was playing in severe pain and really struggling to recover. The medical team here have been brilliant but eventually it got to the stage where I had to see a specialist and unfortunately the damage was worse than we had hoped."

He added: "Retiring at 27 was something I never expected but I couldn't have asked for a better club to finish my playing career at."

The Welshman said there were "many highs and lows" in his career, with his two caps for his country right up there at the top.

United boss Pep Clotet described the shock news as "very sad".

He said: "I have only had a chance to work with him for a very short time but he is a fantastic professional, a really good player and I know this is a decision that he has not taken lightly.

"He remains part of the Oxford United family and as a club we will offer him help and support in whatever he does next."

Malachi Napa, pictured against Oxford City during pre-season, has extended his deal at the Kassam until 2019. Picture: *Steve Daniels*

Napa nabs new deal to 2019

EXCITING Oxford United prospect Malachi Napa has signed a new deal that will keep him at the club until 2019.

The 18-year-old forward has impressed since making the step up from youth football last summer when he signed his first professional contract.

He is yet to make an appearance in yellow but put in a string of impressive performances on loan at National League South play-off chasers Hampton & Richmond Borough.

Napa, who joined the Oxford academy from Reading at the age of 16, said: "I have learned so much over the last few months and it's great to have everything sorted for next season as well. I want to thank the manager and staff for having such faith in me and will do everything I can to repay that by listening, learning and hopefully pushing on from here and challenging for a place in the first team more regularly."

United gaffer Pep Clotet said Napa deserves his chance, adding: "He is a very bright player, has pace and ability and now it is up to him to keep improving. He did well on loan and has come back that bit tougher and with a few games under his belt.

"We look forward to working with him over a longer period and seeing him continue to develop."

Young U's score eight to extend winning run

DETAILS for Oxford United's FA Youth Cup third round game against Dagenham and Redbridge have been finalised.

After a win at Gloucester City in the first round and a thrilling win over Bristol Rovers in the second the Under-18s will take on the Daggers on December 13 at Oxford City's Court Place Farm. Kick off is at 7pm.

The United youngsters extended their unbeaten run to eight with a 6-1 demolition away at Forest Green Rovers on Saturday and a 2-1 League Cup win against Leyton Orient on Tuesday afternoon.

Owen James (twice), Jack Stevens, Kyran Lofthouse, Aaron Heap and Albie Hopkins all found the target on Saturday before the latter struck a brace on Tuesday.

Coach Leon Blackmore-Such praised his team after the big league win against Forest Green.

Albie Hopkins scores against Leyton Orient. Picture: *OUFC*

He said: "It's not just the result. We had a player step up from the Under 15s – he was brought down for the second penalty and did well – plus there were outstanding performances from a lot of players including Matt Berry-Hargreaves who did really well in defence."

Meanwhile, Oxford's Under-16s have been crowned south England champions after beating AFC Wimbledon 2-1 in the southern semi final on Saturday to set up a national final against Hartlepool United.

Ben Mulley and Brooklyn Rogers were on target for the even younger U's.

The final will take place at Derby County's training ground on December 10.

Littlemore put in big performance to win

Rugby

A GARGANTUAN second half effort from high-flying Littlemore overturned a hefty 16-point half time deficit to shock Wheatley.

Wheatley gave their visitors no time to settle and were 3-0 ahead within two minutes when Aaron Laman slotted a penalty for a high tackle.

The away side hit back through an Arron Ward unconverted try, but that's as good as it got for Littlemore as Wheatley ran away with the first half.

Laman added another two penalties before Jack Taylor crashed over after an impressive 75 metre run. Laman added the extras.

Laman had a try disallowed but Jack Atkinson dived over before half time for an unconverted try and a 21-5 lead.

But then the fight back began.

Wheatley wouldn't score again as their fired-up visitors, inspired by their half time chat, scored an unanswered 20 second-half points to win 25-21 and bag a hard-earned bonus point.

Elsewhere in Saturday's BBO Premier fixtures, Didcot narrowly lost 6-5 at home to bottom club Crowthorne while struggling Abingdon were thrashed 73-12 at Tadley.

This Saturday sees Wheatley (7th) travel to Abingdon (10th) and Didcot (8th) visit Hungerford (6th).

SkyBet League 1		GP	GD	PTS
1	Wigan Athletic	19	24	42
2	Shrewsbury Town	19	13	40
3	Scunthorpe United	20	12	38
4	Blackburn Rovers	19	17	37
5	Bradford City	20	7	36
6	Charlton Athletic	19	6	35
7	Peterborough United	20	2	29
8	Portsmouth	20	1	29
9	Oxford United	20	7	27
10	Fleetwood Town	20	-1	27
11	Blackpool	20	-1	27
12	Rotherham United	19	4	26
13	Walsall	19	-1	25
14	Southend United	19	-7	25
15	MK Dons	20	-7	24
16	Doncaster Rovers	20	-4	23
17	Oldham Athletic	19	-6	23
18	Bristol Rovers	19	-8	21
19	Rochdale	19	-4	20
20	AFC Wimbledon	20	-7	20
21	Gillingham	20	-7	20
22	Northampton Town	20	-17	19
23	Bury Town	20	-9	17
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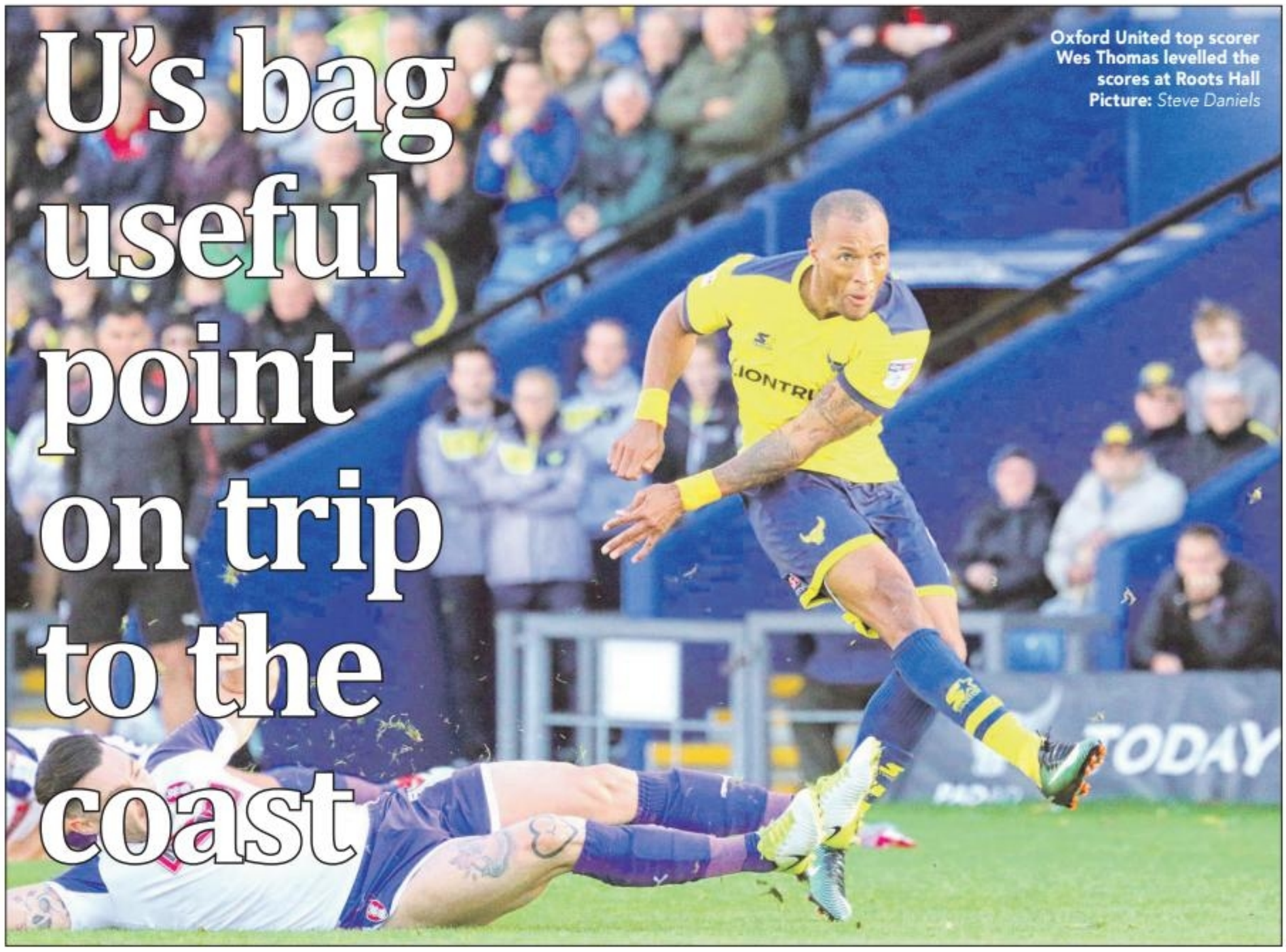
U's bag useful point on trip to the coast



Oxford United top scorer Wes Thomas levelled the scores at Roots Hall **Picture:** *Steve Daniels*

By George Welch

PEP Clotet praised his side's character and commitment for a 'deserved' point at Southend United as the in-form Wes Thomas netted his eighth goal of the season.

United had to come from behind with Thomas' third goal in four games quickly cancelling out Simon Cox's first half opener.

That wasn't the end of the goal-mouth action though, as both sides struck the woodwork and each had sustained periods of pressure.

The Shrimpers had two goals ruled out and U's boss Clotet, whose side are in ugly form, was delighted with a point against a side unbeaten on their own patch.

He said: "My side had a lot of character and put in a lot of hard work. It was a cold day and we've made the most out of it – we put in a lot of effort to get that deserved point.

"We know if we stay in the game then it's only a matter of time before we get our football going and will get our chances. Wes Thomas just proved that."

He added: "It's a very useful point because a lot of big teams have lost here and they haven't lost at home. Every point counts in the league."

Clotet made two changes from the 4-2 defeat against Blackburn Rovers the previous week, with the Spaniard singling out one of the players to come into the side for praise.

Former Barcelona man Xemi, making his first league start for the club, impressed in the middle of the park on a freezing cold day at the seaside.

And his gaffer was happy with his compatriot's contribution.

"Xemi deserved to be playing. It was an opportunity for him," Clotet said.

"There was a lot of pressure for this game and he was up to it. He will realise soon though that it was not the game he was hoping to make his league debut in!"

United have since left the cold behind and are currently putting in the hard work at a training camp in Catalonia, where both Xemi and Clotet are from.

They have the weekend off after failing to progress in the FA Cup but are back in league action on December 9, hosting Doncaster Rovers.

Ugly game, step in the right direction

DEFENDER Mike Williamson believes the draw against Southend United is a 'big step in the right direction' for an Oxford United side struggling for consistency.

The experienced centre back was reinstated in the starting XI as the U's ground out an important away draw, something Pep Clotet's side have been criticised for not doing so far this season.

But United, who have lost five of their last seven matches in all competitions, left a freezing Roots Hall with a point – and former Newcastle United man Williamson said the team are making positive strides.

The 34-year-old said: "That was not so attractive to the eye but an ugly game and a step in the right direction for us.

"The gaffer highlighted everything we were going to come up against and he said before the game that this was going to be about character and putting our bodies on the line.

"We did that at the right times and we created chances."

Williamson, who has made 12 Oxford appearances this season, added: "It's a pleasure to watch some of our football [but] doing the ugly things was fantastic.

"Putting bodies on the line and getting a draw is a big step. It's not a win but it's a big step in the right direction."

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